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Classical Writers.

Edited by John Richard Green.

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VERGIL.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

In the following pages I have expressed some views which are, so far as I know, new, upon the chronology of Vergil's poems, and on the leading ideas of the *Aeneid*. For a detailed substantiation of these I must refer to two pamphlets published at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, entitled respectively *Ancient Lives of Vergil, with an Essay on the Poetry of Vergil in connection with his Life and Times*, and *Suggestions Introductory to a Study of the Aeneid*. I hope at some future time to publish similar papers on the development of the story of Aeneas' wanderings, and on early criticisms of Vergil, in support of what I have said in Chapters IV. and VI. of the present essay.

H. N.

Oxford, *August*, 1879.

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VERGIL.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE poetry of Vergil may be roughly said to sum up and represent the poetical tendencies and traditions of the Greco-Roman world. Though an Italian, and therefore not free from the defects entailed by his literary surroundings, Vergil was able, by his wonderful power of style, to produce work which marks the climax of a particular kind of poetry, which completes and embodies in itself much that preceding poets had been striving after, and which gave the law to succeeding generations of writers. Often as it was imitated, his style was never equalled in its own kind, still less was it ever superseded; it dominated all subsequent Latin poetry and exercised a powerful influence even upon Latin prose. It may therefore not be inappropriate to notice one or two of the main characteristics of that classical poetry of which Vergil is a representative.

Modern poetry appeals, or professes to appeal, to a large circle of readers. The poetry of the Greeks and Romans, on the other hand, spoke to and represented the feelings of a comparatively small audience. The great poets of Hellas were, so far as we know, citizens of small communities whose life was based upon the institution of slavery, and in which, consequently, riches and well-being were the acknowledged property of a few. Slavery, or the system which allows one human being to possess another as property, was accepted as a natural arrangement by the ancient world of Greece and Rome, which took comparatively little account of national life, and still less of human life as a whole. The city communities of antiquity consisted of two well-defined sections, a free and a slave population, of which the latter was naturally, in most cases, the more numerous. To the alleviation of the miseries which necessarily arose from such a state of things the ancients, on the whole, gave neither thought nor effort. And though it was possible and indeed often happened that a slave might rise by virtue of his merits or accomplishments into the order of free men, it still remains true that literature, and the class of interests which literature represents, were the property of the free, that is, of the few.

It may be said, indeed, and with truth, that from its very nature literature can only appeal to and be enjoyed by a minority. But, while this may be admitted, it still remains true that the character of a literature is always profoundly modified by the circumstances of the society in which it is born. The effects of the limitation which I have attempted to indicate are visible in the poetry of the Greeks and Romans, which, while it often surpasses modern poetry in harmony, clearness, grandeur of conception, and beauty of form, falls behind it in depth, insight, sympathy, and soul-searching power. The sorrow and joy of a great poet are commensurate with that of the world which he knows. The greatness of modern events, the wide range of their effects, the deep human interests touched upon or awakened, of all this the best modern poetry is the record and the reflection. But the Greek or Roman world would have had no ear for the tones of world-embracing passion which sound in the verse of Goethe or of Shelley. Simplicity and clearness characterize the epic, tragedy, and lyric of the Greeks. Their epic is the celebration of heroic exploit, suffering, and endurance: their tragedies, in which primitive moral problems are presented in a dramatic form, are in great part studies from a dying mythology; their lyric is the passionate expression of the simpler feelings. But the range of modern poetry, if wider, is also deeper. There is no self-searching or self-analysis in classical poetry, where the action moves and the characters are developed within the lines of simple stories and of great situations. If then it lacks the depth and variety of feeling which marks the best modern poetry, it is also free from the vulgar and morbid forms of self-analysis with which some modern literature has made us familiar. The great thoughts of the classical poets suggest more than is actually expressed in the beautiful outlines of their verse and language; but they stop, for the most part, with suggestion, and are seldom if ever developed into the manifold form and colouring in which modern poetry luxuriates.

It was given to the Greeks to attain an independent national development, uninfluenced for the most part by any civilization other than their own. Hand in hand with their national and political growth their poetry advanced from the simple rudiments of mythe and lay and epic to elaborate forms of lyric and drama, until it expired in the learned labours of the Alexandrian school, and the delicate prettinesses of the Anthology. The Italians, on the other hand, never developed a national literature on its own lines. The influence of Greece was too strong for them; as early as the time of Pyrrhus (about 280 B.C.) Greek historians were busy with Rome, and easily overwhelmed the too docile Italians, who had had no time to cultivate a learning of their own, with a deluge of second-hand and second-rate mythology. The last poem of importance composed in the national Italian metre was the *Punic War* of Naevius, written towards the end of the third century before Christ. From this time onwards Greek metres reigned supreme in Italy. Ennius wrote his great epic chronicle of Roman history in hexameters, Plautus and the other dramatists used the Greek iambic and trochaic. Although the Italians had plenty of original power, and must have been conscious of it, the study and imitation of Greek models, in regard both to metre and handling of the subject matter, was henceforth regarded by them as their first duty, and on this principle they continued to work without question and with unceasing care till the time of Vergil, Horace, and Ovid, when, indeed, it was not abandoned, but when new models, accepted by subsequent generations as classical, were formed within the domain of Roman literature itself.

Among the most noteworthy characteristics of ancient life is the encouragement held out to literature by kings, nobles, and persons in high authority. It was a fundamental idea of the Greeks and Romans that a man who aspired to lead his fellows must be a man of various powers and accomplishments; a soldier, statesman, orator, and, if not a man of letters, at least a man of literary cultivation. To realize such an idea was possible in the times of classical antiquity, when the sphere of life was comparatively narrow. In modern times, owing to the wide extent of knowledge required in any one great department of human activity, a Pericles or a Julius Caesar would hardly be possible. In the Greek world literature was, as a matter of course, cultivated and patronized by the great wherever it flourished, whether in Attica, in Sicily, in Macedonia, or at Alexandria, and the Italians followed in the footsteps of the Greeks. After the Second Punic War (concluded 201 B.C.) the study of Greek became a passion with the Roman nobility, partly for its own sake, partly as a foundation on which to build up an improved Italian literature. From Greek literary men taken into their houses as dependants, and often admitted to their intimacy, the Roman aristocracy learned their lessons in Greek history, poetry, philosophy, and rhetoric. They wrote Greek exercises, spoke Greek speeches, and filled their ears with the rhythm and fall of Greek periods. They travelled to Athens and Rhodes, and heard the lectures of celebrated Greek professors. And, being often ambitious of achieving literary success themselves, they looked with a kindly eye on the men of talent or genius who, with less wealth or social resources than their own, were engaged in the great work of improving the national literature. There were many such in the two last centuries of the Roman republic among the upper *bourgeoisie* of Rome and Italy: men whose families, though wealthy enough to maintain a respectable position, were not ennobled by office or aristocratic descent. The names of Ennius, Lucilius, Catullus, Vergil, Horace, Tibullus, and Propertius readily occur in this connection, and more might be added to the list.

This high appreciation bestowed upon the pursuits of literature was not confined to the nobility, but was shared by the general public. The Romans and Italians were proud of their rising literature, and of those who by their productions furthered it and gave it distinction. A poet of real eminence was liable to be literally pointed at as he passed along the street; sometimes the crowd in the theatre would rise as he entered. The people cherished a kindly and sympathetic feeling towards men of letters, which would not have existed had it not been felt that the men of letters were doing a great and genuine work, in the success of which the Italians as a nation were deeply interested.

In this connection it may be worth while to observe the relation in which literary men stood to each other. As is natural, we note in every period of Roman literature the existence of cliques and coteries, with the passionate attachments and dislikes by which artists and writers are always characterized. In the earlier half and middle of the last century before Christ, we may remark the devoted friendship of Calvus and Catullus, both again on kindly terms with the Ciceros, and very probably with the poet Lucretius. Later on, Vergil, Varius, and Horace form another circle, favoured first by Asinius Pollio, and afterwards by Maecenas and Octavianus; a third group is represented by Aemilius Macer, Propertius, and Ovid. If these men loved their friends, they also hated their enemies. Tanusius Geminus has been covered with eternal ridicule by Catullus, nor is Maevius spared by Vergil and Horace. The fact is important, so far as it goes, as testifying to the lively interest which these poets took in their own and each other's work; for men do not form coteries or cherish loves and hatreds about pursuits which they feel to be obsolete or artificial.

II.

LITERATURE AND THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE.—GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POETRY OF THE SO-CALLED AUGUSTAN AGE (B.C. 31—A.D. 14).

It is important to bear in mind that the imperial system which Julius Caesar had conceived, and the foundations of which were actually laid by Augustus, cannot be said to have been securely established until after the battle of Actium, if even then. The overthrow of the republican constitution was a work of time, requiring much wisdom and patience in the carrying out. For the sake of convenience it may be proper to speak of the literature of the Augustan age, as if this period had certain defined limits of time and special characteristics of manner and thought; but it must not be forgotten that these supposed limits are artificial, and that the so-called Augustan literature had begun to exist some time before the battle of Actium. Vergil, the foremost representative of the new style of poetry, was in his fortieth year, and had written his *Eclogues* and most of his *Georgics* before Octavianus returned to Italy, after settling the affairs of the empire, in 29 B.C.

A great deal of criticism has been written on the supposition, implied or avowed, that the poetry of

Vergil and Horace was influenced, and to a certain extent spoiled, by the patronage of the newly-formed imperial court. No doubt these two poets differed from almost all their eminent predecessors in espousing the cause of the Caesars against that of the republic. But Vergil had a special reason, as will be seen below, for attaching himself first to Julius Caesar and afterwards to his nephew; while Horace, who was originally a republican, accepted the new order of things with reluctance, and did not respond to the advances of Octavianus with any great cordiality. It is true, indeed, that Vergil and Horace, and still more Ovid, speak of the *princeps* and the consolidation of the Roman power under him as godlike and divine, and altogether use language with regard to the empire which, if interpreted according to modern ways of thinking, savours of flattery and exaggeration. But it must be remembered, in the first place, that the words *deus* and *divinus* did not convey to an Italian ear so much as the words *god* and *godlike* do to our own: and in the second place, that such language, when used by the poets, although it cannot be denied that it involved a certain amount of flattery, was in great measure a sincere expression of their own and of the popular feeling. It was quite in the spirit of the ancient Greek and Roman religions to attribute a divine quality to the commanding genius of superior men. Julius Caesar had been worshipped in this way by the populace before his name was formally added to those of the gods of the state-religion. It is probable then that the poets, when they echoed the popular voice, did so to a great extent from sincerity of conviction; like the people, they welcomed a power which seemed able at length to put an end to the convulsions of civil war which had vexed Italy for more than fifty years.

It may be said then with reason that the cordial relation which existed between Augustus and the great poets of his time did not greatly differ from that which, as we have seen, commonly existed in all antiquity between men of letters and their powerful friends. The empire did not create a particular kind of literature, but found it existing, and the men of letters who accepted the empire did so, not in a servile or cowardly spirit, but from a genuine political conviction. Still it is not to be denied that the poetry usually called Augustan has a different character from that of the troubled period which preceded the fall of the republic. The style and the thoughts of Vergil and Horace, the style and, to a certain extent, the thoughts of Ovid, are different from those of Lucretius and Catullus. It is remarkable that in the matter of style each of these three poets established a classical form; a form, that is, which was accepted by the literary world of the Roman Empire as unsurpassable, and as a model for all subsequent writers to follow. They had improved the style of the epic, lyric, and elegiac poetry which they found existing; but no one ever thought of improving upon the hexameter of Vergil, or the stanza of Horace, or the couplet of Ovid. With this perfection of form there is united, in the case of Vergil and Horace, a certain artificiality of writing, which sometimes prefers inversion to directness, and elaboration to simplicity. This quality, which distinguishes the poets in question from Lucretius and Catullus, is sometimes regarded as the result of the artificial conditions upon which literature was now entering. It is supposed that the freedom of the republic encouraged openness and directness of utterance, and that the patronage given to literary men by the court of Augustus fostered an unhealthy and dependent tone of mind, which was reflected in a degenerate style. The truth seems to be that this change of style had begun some time before the establishment of the new *régime.* In prose, Sallust anticipates in many respects the manner of the first century of the empire; and, if a few fragments may be trusted, Varro of Atax must have nearly anticipated the technical form of Vergil's hexameter. The school represented by Vergil and Horace differed from that of Lucretius and

Catullus mainly on literary grounds. Vergil and Horace aimed at a more perfect form of expression for Roman poetry, based upon a more careful manipulation of the Latin language, and above all on a profounder study of the great Greek models, than had yet been known. Hence the artificiality and elaboration which is, so to speak, the defect of their excellence; hence also the fact that their style unites all the best elements of Latin expression with much of the beauty and life-like grace of the Greek masterpieces. The style of Vergil and Horace represents a literary, not a political, tendency; it exemplifies the principles of a new poetic guild which was conscious of new powers, and aware of undiscovered capabilities in the Latin language. For the first time in the history of Italian literature they practically laid down the principle that no amount of labour could be too great to expend upon poetical expression; that genius, power, freedom of utterance, were not enough to make a perfect poet. Like Cicero in the sphere of oratorical prose, Vergil and Horace are never satisfied with the form of their work; they know no end to the striving for perfection. And it is perhaps from the comparative want of this feeling that the splendid genius of Ovid has failed on the whole to produce an impression adequate to its luxuriant power and inventive capacity. It is possible that had Propertius lived longer he might have worked himself clear of the obscurity and tortuousness of expression which disfigures so much of his writing, and given, as he certainly could have given, a touch of greater depth and dignity to the classical form of the Latin elegiac.

If again we compare the subjects chosen by Vergil and Horace with those treated by Lucretius and Catullus, we are struck by a difference. Lucretius devoted himself to expounding in Latin poetry the doctrines of the Epicurean school. Few things in literature are more wonderful than the power and pathos with which he performed his task: but with all this his poem remains the expression of a particular phase of thought, not of the representative ideas of an age. The lyrics of Catullus, when they are not stiff translations from the Greek, are purely personal, the expression of his own loves and hatreds. Horace certainly, and probably Vergil, wrote in youth poems of purely personal interest, but their riper work bears the mark of a wider aspiration, and is the exponent of greater thoughts. Neither of them would submit to attach himself, definitely and permanently, to any one of the current philosophical systems. The thoughts which they aim at expressing are of universal application. In this way also, as well as in their style, Horace and Vergil are more classical, more truly representative, than Catullus and Lucretius. It was true in their case as in so many others that the utmost endeavour after perfection of form went hand in hand with comparative disengagement of thought. They seldom touch a subject without idealizing it, and prefer idealization to bare representation or description. The subjects which they chose are typical of the same tendency. Though Vergil at one time intended to write on the exploits of Pollio, and at another on those of Augustus, he never carried out his intention at all in the one case, or more than indirectly in the other. The limits of such themes he seems to have felt to be inconsistent with his notions of what poetry should be. His *Eclogues* or Pastorals, the first productions of the kind in Roman poetry, are imaginary or allegorical pictures. The best thing in his *Georgics*, or poem on agriculture, is the exuberant enjoyment which pervades it of the fertility of the earth and the kindness of the sky. The theme of the *Aeneid* is the greatness of Rome as seen through the halo of legend. Turning to Horace, we find that many of his Odes are an attempt to reproduce in a Roman form the great manner of Pindar, which enshrines in the celebration of warlike or athletic achievements the thoughts and traditions of older days. His Satires and Epistles embody maxims, usually of the kindlier sort, on the ways of human life. But he declined or evaded any direct celebration of the exploits of Augustus, natural as such a theme might have seemed to a poet in his somewhat dependent position. Both Horace and Vergil preferred suggestion to direct statement, and general ideas to the description of particular scenes.

A marked feature of the literary feeling of this period is the tendency to fix upon the history and antiquities of Rome as a subject for poetry. Since the time of Ennius the Roman poets, at least the most eminent of them, appear to have given up this theme; but Vergil in his *Aeneid*, Propertius in many of his elegies, and Ovid in his *Fasti*, did much to revive the interest of their countrymen in it, and there are many passages in Horace which show that though he did not concern himself with the details of the subject, his mind was in full sympathy with the line of thought which his brother poets were working out. The revival of this interest is so far connected with the political circumstances of the time, as the consolidation of authority in the hands of the Caesar, and the sense of security which was growing up hand in hand with it, gave to men of letters the leisure and inclination to look back to the beginnings of the Roman system of law and religion, and to contemplate the process by which it had increased to its present greatness. After the agony and bloodshed of two generations, the restoration of peace and the renewal of power to the city of Romulus might well appear to her patriotic children the beginning of a new national life, enriched by the consciousness of a great past which deserved the earnest study of historians and poets.

It may be said then in general of the literature of this period that its style was more perfect, and its ideas wider and less personal, than those of the preceding era. I am speaking of its representative writers; for there was an opposition party among the literary men of this age, in which Asinius Pollio was a notable figure. But the views of this opposition may be said to have been fairly beaten out of the field by the school of Vergil and Horace, who, whatever their faults, unquestionably caught and represented the living spirit of their time. Like all great writers, they had the creative sense which enabled them to see instinctively what was the next step to be taken by those who would influence the thought and language of Italy. This step once taken, reaction was impossible, and the style of Vergil, Horace, and Ovid became the model for all subsequent writers in the same branches of literature.

III.

AUTHORITIES FOR THE LIFE OF VERGIL.

OUR authorities for the life of Vergil reach, indirectly, as far back as the times of the poet himself. Memoirs were written of him by the poet Varius, and by other friends, one of whom was Melissus, a freedman of Maecenas. From these memoirs it is probable that Suetonius, who wrote the history of the first twelve Caesars, compiled a Life of Vergil, of which much undoubtedly remains in the interpolated memoir attributed to Aelius Donatus, the celebrated grammarian of the fourth century after Christ. Much genuine information is contained in this biography, but in all probability much is lost and something added. A few anecdotes and some fragments of correspondence, probably all taken from the contemporary sources mentioned above, are preserved by Gellius and Macrobius, who wrote respectively in the second and the fifth centuries A.D. There is also a short life prefixed to the commentary by Valerius Probus, a celebrated scholar of the first century. The biography prefixed to the commentary of Servius is, as I have shown elsewhere,[1] mostly a mere compilation from Suetonius. Something can be gleaned from the works of Vergil himself, and from those of contemporary poets.

[1] *Ancient Lives of Vergil*, p. 21.

IV.

LIFE AND POEMS OF VERGIL.—FIRST PERIOD.—FROM HIS BIRTH TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE "ECLOGUES."

PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO was born on the fifteenth of October in the year 70 B.C. in the first consulship of Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus and Marcus Licinius Crassus, at a village called Andes in the neighbourhood of Mantua, being thus, like many of his predecessors and contemporaries in literature, not a Roman, but an Italian provincial. The name of Andes, which seems to have belonged properly not to a village, but to a district (*pagus*) is Celtic; Caesar often mentions a Gaulish tribe so called. The family name Vergilius is also Celtic; so perhaps may be the *cognomen* Maro and the name of the poet's mother, Magia. It is remarkable that the list of Roman poets is largely made up of provincial names. As early or immediate contemporaries of Vergil, who were also provincials, may be mentioned Furius Bibaculus of Cremona (born 99 B.C.), Varro of Atax (born B.C. 82), Asinius Pollio of Marsian descent (born B.C. 76), Aemilius Macer of Verona (died 16 B.C.), Cornelius Gallus of Forum Julii (born B.C. 69), Horatius Flaccus of Venusia (born B.C. 65), and the critic Quintilius Varus of Cremona (died B.C. 24). Lucretius died on Vergil's sixteenth birthday, and the great Veronese poet Catullus did not long survive him. When Julius Caesar was assassinated (March, B.C. 44) Vergil was twenty-five years old.

The parents of Vergil, like those of Horace and Gallus, were of obscure social position, his mother Magia Polla being the daughter of a courier, in whose service, according to one account, his father Vergilius was when his industry raised him from the position of servant to that of his master's son-in-law. In these circumstances the elder Vergil is said to have increased his substance by keeping bees and buying up tracts of woodland. During the troubled years immediately preceding the birth of the poet it would no doubt be easy to buy land cheap, the disorders following on the civil wars of Marius and Sulla having done much to interfere with the security of property. Vergil, whose childhood and boyhood were spent amid his father's woods, is said to have never lost a certain appearance of rusticity (*facies rusticana*), and his detractors were not slow to taunt him with his rural origin. The lovers of his poetry will on the other hand be grateful for the accident of early circumstances to which, in all probability, they owe so much of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. Living at Mantua, Vergil received the rudiments of his education in the neighbouring city of Cremona, already the birthplace of the poet Furius Bibaculus, and the critic Quintilius Varus. Furius Bibaculus was Vergil's senior by nearly thirty years: Varus was one of his intimate friends, and much beloved by Horace as well. In his sixteenth year the boy Vergil was taken to Milan, and about two years afterwards to Rome. It is clear that his father, like Horace's, though himself born in a humble station, had the honourable ambition of securing for his son the best education attainable.

Although the genius of Vergil, unlike that of Catullus, was not quickly developed, he must, if our traditions may be trusted, have begun to write poetry when quite a boy. The earliest production attributed to him is an epitaph on a highway robber named Ballista, who seems to have plied his trade during these turbulent years in Vergil's neighbourhood, much to the annoyance of peaceful travellers. Whether Vergil himself took much trouble about the fate of his earlier pieces, and the form and order of their publication, there is no evidence to decide. In the epitaph which he is said to have written for himself he mentions (perhaps for brevity's sake) nothing but his *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*.[1] A collection of short poems called

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[1] Cecini pascua, rura, duces.

Catalepton[1] (*ποιήματα κατὰ λεπτόν*, or minor poems) bears indeed, and bore in antiquity, the name of Vergil; but in its present shape it contains several pieces about the authorship of which it is difficult to pronounce anything with certainty. Some poems in the collection show a close study and imitation of Catullus, which, no doubt, is just what might be expected of Vergil's boyhood. The eighth, a little poem on a muleteer named Sabinus, is a direct parody of Catullus' fourth poem, the *Phasellus;* nor is there any reason to doubt its genuineness. The third and fourth, short lampoons on one Noctuinus, are obvious imitations of Catullus' style and manner. The fifth, though containing reminiscences of Catullus, is an invective exactly in the manner of some of Horace's Epodes. Its two first lines, in which the writer speaks of himself as a *quondam* soldier, show that it cannot be by Vergil. It is a torrent of abuse in the genuine reckless Roman fashion, directed against a spendthrift and profligate friend of Caesar; whether of Octavianus or of Julius does not appear. If Vergil really wrote lampoons, he must have displayed in his boyhood a spirit very different from that which characterized his youth and manhood. On the other hand there does not seem any valid reason for doubting the genuineness of the seventh poem, of which I shall have something to say shortly. The tenth, which may equally well be genuine, must have been written in the year 41 B.C., when Vergil was ejected from his farm. The twelfth must, as I hope I have shown elsewhere,[2] have been written in the year 32 B.C., and must refer to Phraates, king of Parthia, who had at that time been seriously threatening the Roman frontier. In style it is hardly equal to what Vergil could have written in his thirty-ninth year. The sixth is a votive poem addressed to Venus. Vergil is represented as promising her a costly sacrifice in case of his finishing his *Aeneid.*

Four other poems, the *Moretum* (Salad), *Copa*

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[1] Not *Catalecton*: see *Ancient Lives*, &c., p. 31.

[2] *Ancient Lives*, &c., p. 32.

(Hostess), *Culex* (Gnat), and *Ciris* are usually printed in the editions of Vergil after the *Catalepton*. The *Moretum* and *Copa* are pretty and playful pieces not unworthy of Vergil's boyhood, but there is, as far as I know, nothing in them which enables us to fix either their date or their authorship. The *Ciris*, an elaborate mythological poem, or rather poetical exercise, is not now assigned to Vergil by any competent critic. The *Culex*, on the other hand, has the apparent support of a respectable tradition. Suetonius says that Vergil at the age of sixteen wrote a poem bearing this title, the subject of which was as follows. A shepherd, tired with the summer heat, lies down and goes to sleep under a tree, when a serpent creeps towards him out of a neighbouring marsh. A gnat flies up at the moment and stings the shepherd on the forehead. The shepherd wakes, and having ungratefully killed the gnat, proceeds to demolish the serpent. Lucan, Statius, and Martial also speak of the *Culex* as Vergil's first work; but Lucan and Statius appear to have thought that it was written in his twenty-seventh year. The poem which has come down to us under the name of *Culex* is a very dull composition in hexameters, long out of all proportion to its subject, which is trivial enough in itself. The remonstrances of the gnat's ghost with the shepherd are drawn out in passages of puerile rhetoric, and the rest of the piece is made up for the most part of platitudes on some of the ordinary commonplaces of Latin poetry. I was until lately unable to make up my mind whether the *Culex* is a genuine production of Vergil, or his genuine production interpolated, or altogether a forgery; but Mr. Munro has quite recently convinced me by arguments based partly on the utter weakness of the poem, partly on important considerations affecting the metre, that it cannot possibly be assigned to Vergil.

At Rome, Vergil, now a boy of sixteen, was set down, after the fashion of the time, to the study of rhetoric. His father had probably intended that he should adopt the legal profession and make a reputation as an advocate. But Vergil was naturally unfitted for speaking, and although he studied rhetoric under the best masters, among others under Epidius, the master of Antonius and Octavianus, he made but little progress. His public efforts as an advocate appear to have been limited to a single case. From rhetoric he proceeded in the ordinary course to philosophy, which he studied under Siron, a celebrated exponent of the Epicurean system. There is a poem which now stands seventh in the collection of minor pieces, which, if it is really Vergil's, is interesting as enabling us to realize his feelings at that time. The writer speaks of the glow of happiness with which he is giving up grammar and rhetoric, and even his much loved poetry, for higher studies. "Away with you, empty colour-bottles of the rhetoricians, words swollen with water, but not of the dews of Greece; away with you, Stilo, Tarquitius, and Varro, you nation of pedants soaking with fat, you tinkling cymbals of the class-room. Farewell, too, Sabinus, friend of all my friends; farewell from henceforth, all my beautiful comrades. We are setting our sails for the havens of blessedness, going to hear the learned words of great Siron, and mean to redeem our life from all distraction. Farewell, too, sweet Muses, for to tell the truth, I have found how sweet you are; still I pray you sometimes, but with modesty and at rare intervals, to look on my pages again."[1]

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[1] Ite hinc inanes, ite, rhetorum ampullae,
Inflata rore non Achaico verba;
Et vos, Stiloque Tarquitique Varroque,
Scholasticorum natio madens pingui,
Ite hinc, inane cymbalon iuventutis.
Tuque O, mearum cura, Sexte, curarum,
Vale, Sabine; iam valete, formosi.
Nos ad beatos vela mittimus portus
Magni petentes docta dicta Sironis,
Vitamque ab omni vindicabimus cura.
Ite hinc, Camenae, vos quoque ite iam, sane
Dulces Camenae, nam, fatebimur verum,
Dulces fuistis; et tamen meas chartas
Revisitote, sed pudenter et raro.

The boy-poet's contempt for mere learning is characteristic, and no less so his confidence that philosophy will redeem him from pedantry and rhetoric and the vanities of love-poetry. Of Siron we know little, but he must have had a considerable influence upon Vergil, who was for a long time after this inclined to favour the doctrines of Epicurus. Other influences were probably at work at this period, which gave a serious turn to Vergil's aspirations. Between this time and the composition of the earlier eclogues he learned to admire the philosophic poet Lucretius, the learned Helvius Cinna, Varius the writer of epic, and the tragedian and historian Asinius Pollio. And during these years Suetonius assures us that he attempted a poem on the history of Rome, but gave it up, finding the subject uncongenial. Vergil's own language in the *Eclogues* bears out this statement: "When I was trying to sing of kings and battles, Apollo touched my ear and warned me to desist."[1] But by his twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh year we find him appearing as the originator of an elaborate kind of poetry altogether new in Latin literature.

SECOND PERIOD.—THE "ECLOGUES," OR SELECTIONS FROM PASTORAL POEMS (43 OR 42 TO 37 B.C.).

"The history of pastoral poetry," says Conington, "shows how easily the most simple form of composition may pass into the most artificial." The simplest known form of the pastoral poem is the *idyllion*, or *little picture* of the Sicilian poet Theocritus; a short hexameter piece representing some scene out of country life. The idyll is often a dialogue between two shepherds, sometimes a monologue; the incidents with which it deals are the ordinary occurrences of peasant life, among which the loves and the rivalries of the shepherds are very prominent. In the hands of Theocritus the idyll is, on the whole, what it professes to be. His shepherds and their mistresses are real country folk, talking of their loves and their flocks, and the hills and streams and sea among which the scene is laid are the hills and streams and sea of Sicily. It was not long, however, before the character of the pastoral poem was changed. Instead of writing about real shepherds, poets began to speak of themselves and their friends or enemies as shepherds, or to use the typical names of shepherds to mask their own, or those of their friends or enemies. The pastoral character of the poem became a mere form or setting, which the poet suggested, as in a kind of allegory, a reference to events in his own life and times. This beautiful fancy, by which the poet is linked with nature by a new chain of imagination, is at least as old as the time of Moschus (the end of the third century B.C.), who, in his lovely poem on the death of Bion, speaks of his friend as a shepherd. It is not now possible to trace the stages by which this secondary and more artificial form of the pastoral was developed; but in Vergil's eclogue the shepherd speaks, not only in his own person, but in that of the poet, and the names of his companions are chosen to denote well-known persons in whom the interest of the poet happens to centre. Thus in the fifth eclogue either Julius Caesar, or the poet's brother Flaccus, is intended by Daphnis; in the first, Tityrus is Vergil himself, and so is Menalcas in the fifth, and perhaps both Lycidas and Moeris and Menalcas in the ninth, unless Moeris be there the poet's father. Sometimes, again, persons are mentioned in their own names, as Pollio, the poet's friend and patron, in the third eclogue, his enemies, Bavius and Maevius, in the same, Varius and Cinna in the ninth, Gallus in the tenth.

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[1] Cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthius aurem
Vellit, et admonuit; "Pastorem, Tityre, pingues
"Pascere oportet oves, deductum dicere carmen."

As far as the language and form are concerned, Vergil's eclogues are close imitations, sometimes even literal translations, of Theocritus, to whom Vergil, in the studies which he must have devoted to the Greek poets in his early manhood, had given particular attention. Nor is this all; the names are often Greek, and the scenery described is frequently not that of Mantua, but of Sicily. Yet no anomalies, no artificialities of form, can mar the impression left by the *Eclogues* of Vergil's mastery in his art. In the fanciful play of his treatment, with its strange web of allegory and suggestion, he follows a path quite distinct from that of Theocritus. And, putting this fact aside, Vergil's *Eclogues*, apart from their unique position in Latin literature, must be pronounced a new and original creation, even if the exquisite sound of the language and verse be alone regarded. Never before had the Italian language been made to utter so luxurious and melodious a strain; in trying to echo the accents of Sicily Vergil awoke a music of his own. In the *Lycidas*, Milton has followed Vergil as closely as Vergil followed Theocritus, and I do not suppose that any clearer testimony to the greatness of the Italian poet could possibly be desired.

It is very probable that the ten eclogues which Vergil published were a selection from a large number. They are not arranged in chronological order. To the seventh, a study from Theocritus, which represents a contest of song between two shepherds, Corydon and Alexis, no date can apparently be assigned; the second and third must, however, have been written before the fifth, and the fifth again before the ninth.[1] The second (Corydon and Alexis) was supposed in antiquity to refer to a boy named Alexander given to Vergil by Asinius Pollio. The third, a supposed altercation between Damoetas and Menalcas, speaks of Asinius Pollio as favouring Vergil and encouraging his studies in pastoral poetry. Now Pollio was appointed *legatus* of Gallia Cisalpina in the year 43 B.C. This fact cannot of course be taken as a decisive landmark: but it is possible that the poem was not written later than the year of Pollio's appointment, the twenty-eighth of Vergil's age.

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[1] The ninth contains allusions to the fifth, and the fifth again to the second and third.

The fifth eclogue, entitled Daphnis, is a splendid apotheosis of some person loved and admired by Vergil. Critics in antiquity were not agreed as to who the person was, some referring the poem to Vergil's brother, Vergilius Flaccus, others to Julius Caesar. It is not likely that in a case on which the ancient critics were unable to pronounce unanimously modern scholars will be more fortunate; but there are, I think, several reasons which make in favour of the hypothesis that Daphnis is Caesar. Caesar had been patron of Gallia Transpadana, the district in which Mantua lay, since 68 B.C. In the year 49 he had attached the whole region, and among them very probably the family of Vergil, to his cause, by conferring the rights of Roman citizenship on its inhabitants. There seems in any case no doubt that the attachment of Vergil to the cause of Caesar was quite sincere. The assassination of the great dictator in 44 B.C. convulsed and terrified the Roman world, which thought with passionate regret of the genius it had lost, and saw little but new bloodshed and confusion in the future. As early as the year 43 Caesar was formally recognized as *divus* and an object of public worship; but the multitude at Rome had, by a spontaneous act, begun to venerate him in this way almost immediately after his funeral. Not that Caesar was deified in the sense in which the word would be used in modern theology; but it fell to him as to other men of great power among the ancient Greeks, and among the Romans also when they began to adopt Greek fashions of thought and speaking, to be regarded as a *divus*, or being of a super-human order, to whom prayers might be offered, and in whose honour festivals might be held. What could be more natural than that Vergil, already attached on public grounds to the cause of Caesar, should catch the popular feeling and embody it after his fashion in an allegorical poem? Two or three details in the poem,[1] which are noticed in the commentaries, tend so far as they go to support this hypothesis, and the tone of the whole, in its grandeur and elevation and splendour of diction, seems to transcend the measure of a private sorrow. "Daphnis," says the poet, "is now a god, and in the sheen of his divinity looks for the first time on the threshold of heaven and sees the clouds and the stars beneath his feet.[1] Peace is over all things, the wolf will not harm the cattle, the dove need not fear the net; the shaggy mountains shout for joy, and the rocks and forests answer them."

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[1] See *Ancient Lives*, &c., p. 40.

This is the first instance of that allegorizing strain which will meet us again four years later in a more striking form.

Caesar was worshipped as a god, but Italy was soon a prey to the bloodshed and distraction of a new civil war, the effects of which made themselves felt with great severity in the land of Vergil's birth. In 41 B.C. the territory of Cremona, and part also of that of Mantua, were confiscated and parcelled out among their veterans by the victorious triumvirs Antonius, Octavianus, and Lepidus. The ill-fortune of Mantua brought with it a bad time for the poet and his family, who were expelled from their estate, and fled for refuge to the villa of Siron, Vergil's master in the Epicurean philosophy. "I commit myself to thee,"[2] says Vergil to the villa in the tenth poem of the *Catalepton*, "and with myself those whom I have always loved, if perchance I should hear any gloomy news of my country. Above all shalt thou shelter my father; to him thou shalt be what Mantua and Cremona once were." Where this villa of Siron was is not known.

At the end of the year 41 war again broke out between Octavianus and Lucius Antonius. Asinius

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[1] Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi,
Sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis.

[2] Villula, quae Sironis eras, et pauper agelle,
  Verum illi domino tu quoque divitiae,
Me tibi, et hos una mecum, quos semper amavi,
  Si quid de patria tristius audiero,
Commendo, in primisque patrem. Tu nunc eris illi,
  Mantua quod fuerat quodque Cremona prius.

Pollio, who was allied with the latter, was removed from his position in Cisalpine Gaul, and Alfenus Varus put in his place. . At this point the *Eclogues* come in to help out our scanty knowledge of the time. The ninth eclogue mentions verses addressed to Varus by Vergil, and interceding for Mantua. The poem professes to be a dialogue between Lycidas and Moeris about the dispossession of Menalcas, who is, no doubt, Vergil himself. They complain that his songs have had no power to preserve him the possession of his estate; Lycidas and Moeris too could sing, Lycidas not as an inspired poet, but as a maker of verses; but now they are too sad to sing; Menalcas, their poet, has been robbed of his home and nearly slain. It is impossible to say whether Lycidas and Moeris represent friends of Vergil (Moeris was by some taken to be his father), or whether they are simply personifications of his various feelings. The general scope of the poem is, however, clear enough. Mantua has been sacrificed in spite of Vergil's intercession; Vergil has been ejected from his farm in spite of his achievements as a poet. It seems that the ejection was not carried out without a conflict, in which Vergil only escaped at the peril of his life. He was assisted by a man whose friendship and patronage were in after years of great value to him, the wealthy and accomplished Etruscan, Gaius Cilnius Maecenas. His application to Alfenus Varus was successful. Varus, with the poets Cornelius Gallus and Asinius Pollio, made interest in behalf of Vergil with Octavianus, who, in spite of his unwillingness to offend his veterans, restored the poet to his estate. In gratitude for the part which they had played in the matter, Vergil, in about three years' time, published his *Eclogues* in their honour. The first eclogue is a thankoffering to Octavianus for the poet's restoration.[1]

The poets Propertius and Tibullus suffered in these troubles as well as Vergil; but they were not equally fortunate, so far as we know, in finding a way out of their difficulties.

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[1] For the view here expressed of the relation between the first and the ninth eclogues I have argued at length in *Ancient Lives*, &c., p. 41 foll.

The sixth eclogue, dedicated to Alfenus Varus, may perhaps be assigned to this period; is it as a mark of gratitude to Varus, who had been, if we are rightly informed, a fellow-student of Vergil in the school of Siron? The great feature of the poem is the song of Silenus, who tells the story of the creation, of Deucalion's deluge, and of various heroes of mythology. This beautiful song is the earliest extant poem in which Vergil shows any traces of his philosophical studies. Silenus sings of the origin of the world in words borrowed from the Epicurean system as expounded by Lucretius, of whose poem Vergil had, by this time, evidently made a careful study.

In the next year (40 B.C.) peace was concluded at Brundisium between Octavianus and Antonius, and Asinius Pollio was one of the consuls. To this year must apparently be assigned the fourth eclogue, a rhapsody or prophecy intended, probably, as a double compliment to Octavianus and to Pollio. The poem takes the form of a birthday ode to a child who was to be born during this year. "The golden age," says Vergil, "is to return, and the generations are to begin their course anew. The new-born child is to be initiated[1] into the life of the gods, to walk with demi-gods and heroes, and to rule the world with the manly virtues of his father; he is the offspring of gods, and another Jove is to spring from him. To greet him the earth will blossom with her fairest flowers, the goats will return unbidden to the milk-pails, the lion will lie down with the lamb, there will be no more serpents or poisonous plants, and as he grows up the fields will be yellow with corn, and the brambles will bear the ruddy grape. When he is come to manhood all the evil ways of men shall cease; there shall be no more building of ships, no commerce, no tilling of the soil; the earth shall bear all things everywhere, and there shall be no need of harrow or pruning-hook. The glory of the age is born, who shall wipe out all traces of former guilt and govern the world in righteousness."

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[1] *Ille deum vitam accipiet.* I have defended the translation in a note at the end of the third volume of Conington's *Vergil* (second edition).

Who is the expected child? He may be either the offspring of Pollio, or of Octavianus, who had recently married Scribonia. The allegorizing style of the poem makes any certain interpretation of it nearly impossible, the more so as we have no clue to any Greek model which Vergil can be shown to have followed. Speaking, therefore, with great diffidence, I should say that our best resource is to connect the fourth eclogue with the fifth, in which, as we have seen, Julius Caesar is spoken of in the same mystical strain. Does the present poem, then, refer to the child expected from the recent marriage of Octavianus and Scribonia? There is nothing to stand in the way of such a supposition; while, considering the circumstances of the year, it is very difficult to refer it to the child of Pollio. The peace of Brundisium had apparently put an end to civil war; Octavianus and Antonius were masters of the Roman world. Of Antonius Vergil cannot possibly be thinking; nor could his language, without gross and entirely pointless exaggeration, be applied to the offspring of Asinius Pollio. The coming child is spoken of as the offspring of gods, and as destined to walk, as a ruler of men, in the footsteps of his fathers. Now the family of Asinius Pollio was a provincial one of no great note, whereas the Julii professed to derive their descent from Venus, and therefore from Jupiter himself. Vergil's language therefore may very well apply to a descendant of Julius Caesar; nor should it be forgotten that in the sixth Aeneid[1] he expressly speaks of Augustus as destined to restore the golden age.

In the following year (39 B.C.) Asinius Pollio celebrated his triumph over the Parthini, an Illyrian tribe. Vergil greets his return from Illyria with the eighth eclogue, which begins with the expression of a wish that the poet may one day be able to sing of his achievements in war and in verse. The eclogue itself, apparently written at Pollio's request or suggestion, is a graceful imitation of several poems of Theocritus.

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[1] Augustus Caesar, Divi genus, aurea condet
Saecula qui rursus Latio.—*Aen.* vi. 792.

The last of the eclogues is the tenth, written two years after the eighth in B.C. 37, when the Consul M. Vipsanius Agrippa crossed the Rhine for the first time since it had been passed by Julius Cæsar. The subject of the poem is the loves of Cornelius Gallus, the celebrated elegiac poet and intimate friend of Vergil. As in the first eclogue, Vergil allegorizes. Gallus' mistress is represented as having followed his rival in the train of Agrippa, while Gallus himself is, as Vergil puts it, languishing in Arcadia; that is, if the commentators are right, serving in the army in Italy. Awkward, however, as is the structure of this poem, the music of the verse is so perfect that Milton took the piece as the model for his *Lycidas*.

We have now considered the *Eclogues* in the order of their composition, so far as this can be made out from internal evidence. No date at all, as we have seen, can be assigned to the seventh; no certain date to the second and third. The fifth, if it refers to Julius Caesar, may be assigned to the year 43: the ninth cannot be later than 41, and the first must have been written shortly after, say in B.C. 40; the sixth probably, and certainly the fourth, belong to the same year. The eighth refers to the events of B.C. 39, and the tenth probably to those of B.C. 37. Thus the ten eclogues published by Vergil range from first to last over a period of some seven years.[1]

There is no evidence to show that Vergil published more than one edition of the *Eclogues*. The work, as we have seen, was intended as a thankoffering to Varus, Gallus, and Pollio; and it is likely that the first eclogue owes its place to the compliance of Octavianus with their influential request. The tenth eclogue is really the last in point of time; the fourth and fifth are naturally placed together as kindred in thought and manner, but the rest do not seem to have been arranged on any ascertainable principle.

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[1] Suetonius says that Vergil composed the *Eclogues* in three years. I have attempted to explain this fact on p. 48 of *Ancient Lives of Vergil*.

The success of the *Eclogues* at the time of their publication was so great that they were often recited in the theatre, whether as dramatic pieces with scenic accompaniments, or otherwise, we do not know. Tacitus tells us that on one occasion the public in the theatre rose when Vergil entered, and paid him the same homage as they did to Augustus. This may or may not refer specially to a recitation of the *Eclogues*; but it shows that Vergil was regarded not as the poet of the few, but as the representative of well-understood tendencies in the national literature.

Of Vergil's life during the period which we have been considering we know very little beyond the facts already mentioned. It should, however, be added that by the time when the *Eclogues* were finished Vergil was already the intimate friend of Horace and also of Varius and Tucca, who were afterwards to be the editors of his *Aeneid*. Horace, in describing a journey which he took to Brundisium, probably in the year 37, mentions that he met Vergil at Sinuessa, and speaks of him as one of the most transparent souls, and dearest to himself, that he knows. The friendship of the two poets was of great importance for the future of Latin literature. Though they followed different lines, their styles are curiously akin; and elsewhere I have collected passages from their works which seem to show that they must sometimes have worked and almost thought together.[1] It was a fashion of the time for one poet to use, sometimes unaltered, sometimes with slight alterations, the verses of another whom he loved or admired; and there are several instances of this kind which attest, in their way, the intimacy of Vergil with Horace. The poems of Varius, which must have formed a very important element in the literature of the time, have almost entirely perished; but indications are not lacking that Vergil owed something also to his influence.[1]

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[1] See *Ancient Lives*, &c., pp. 56, 62, 68.

There is some evidence to show that Vergil was at Tarentum during part of the time when he was engaged upon the *Eclogues.* Propertius, in alluding to the seventh eclogue, speaks of it as written near Tarentum: Vergil himself, in the fourth Georgic, speaks of a time when he remembers being there, and there are passages[2] both in Vergil and Horace which could be better explained, could it be shown that the two poets were once in that neighbourhood together. Again, as Mr. Munro has remarked, the character of the country about Tarentum would suit the descriptions in the *Eclogues* much better than that of the country about Mantua.

THIRD PERIOD.—THE GEORGICS, OR POEMS ON HUSBANDRY. (37?—29 B.C.)

As the ten *Eclogues* had been written in honour of Gallus, Varus, and Pollio, the *Georgics* were undertaken out of compliment to Maecenas, who, as we have seen, had aided Vergil in resisting the violence of a veteran soldier in the quarrel arising out of the confiscation of the poet's estate. Maecenas, who himself dabbled in poetry, was a generous friend and patron to several men of letters; and it is he, probably, who introduced Vergil to the nearer friendship of Octavianus.

In the *Eclogues* Vergil had given an Italian rendering of the Idyll of Theocritus. He now turned his attention to the Greek didactic poets, Hesiod, Nicander, and Aratus, and succeeded not only in embodying in Latin language and music all that they had to offer, but (so far as poetical treatment and feeling are concerned) in leaving them far behind him.

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[1] See *Ancient Lives*, &c., p. 68.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 49.

In the first book of the *Georgics* Vergil deals with the cultivation of cereal crops, in the second with that of trees. Cattle are the subject of the third book, and bees of the fourth. Few, if any, didactic poets have ever equalled, and none have ever surpassed Vergil in his power of throwing a poetical colour over the details of an unpoetical subject. His love of the country and of the gods who haunt it is such that no implement, no custom or process of husbandry, is without its kindly associations for him. Hence in great measure the spring of poetry whose influence pervades every page of the *Georgics*. His task is not begun without invoking the blessing of the gods, among whom the Caesar, for his services to his country, is already taking his place. The poet then strikes at once into his subject, telling how labour is the law of human life, since Jupiter first gave its venom to the serpent, his tooth to the wolf, its storms to the sea, that men's wits might be sharpened with toil and thought, and that the world might not become, instead of a kingdom of industry, a nest of idlers. Hence, says Vergil, came all our various arts and inventions, names for the stars, snares for beasts and fishes, axes and saws for the forest. By the kindly aid of Ceres men learned the use of the plough, and thus exchanged corn for acorns as their daily food. Let the husbandman then forget no implement and neglect no necessary precept, for it is the will of the gods that he should till the ground; above all things let him honour the gods of the country, and before he puts his sickle to the corn pay her yearly rites to Ceres with songs of invitation and uncouth dances. The sun and moon and stars are set to give warning to the husbandman of change in the weather. When wind is coming, mark the swelling of the sea, listen to the sound in the mountains and in the forest, and along the shore; look at the long trains of meteors, mark the eddying of chaff and of falling leaves, and the whirling of feathers on the water. Or when rain is at hand, see how the cranes fly before it; the heifer looks up with dilated nostril, the swallow flies twittering round the lakes, the frogs chant their ancient complainings in the marsh, the ant comes out with its eggs from its dwelling, the army of rooks leaves its pasture, chiding the air with multitudinous pinions; the birds of the sea and the marsh run into the water and throw it over their heads and shoulders in mere delight. Above all mark the aspects of the sun and moon, for it is they who chiefly give the husbandman his signs of weather; nay, did not the sun, when mighty Julius fell, hide his lustrous head in a veil of darkness, so that the godless generations feared the coming of everlasting night? At Caesar's death all nature was moved; earth, sea, and living creatures gave their tokens, Aetna poured flame and molten rocks from her caverns, the Germans heard arms sounding through the vaults of heaven, and the Alps were shaken with strange convulsions. A voice was heard crying aloud through the silence of the woods, pale spectres roamed abroad, cattle spoke with the voice of men, the rivers stopped in their courses, the earth yawned, there were tears of mourning on the ivory in the temples, and sweat on the statues of bronze. Eridanus overflowed his banks, and hurried trees and flocks and folds along in mad destruction; the sacrifices gave gloomy signs, the waters were turned to blood, wolves howled through the cities at night, lightnings and terrible comets gave their signs in the heavens. For this deed the gods exacted a more dreadful vengeance; for Roman again met Roman in deadly strife at Philippi, and Emathia and the plains of Haemus are again waxing fat with Italian blood. The time is out of joint; O gods of our country, hinder not this our young captain, if no other may, from bringing us deliverance! The land is desolated with war and crime, the plough is held in no honour, the fields lie untended and there is none to till them, the pruning-hook is beaten out into the blade of a sword. On this side Euphrates, on the other side Germany, is stirring up war; city is arming against city; the demons of strife are abroad, and there is none to check or hinder them.

Thus did the poet give form and coherence to the floating rumours which gathered in an atmosphere of wild excitement and superstitious imaginations; for it was to this condition that a long series of war and crime, culminating in the murder of the greatest man of his generation, had brought the inhabitants of Italy. Vergil's patriotic feelings take a different direction in the second Georgic. It is now the productive power of the soil of Italy, the beauty of her woods and waters, the greatness of her ancient and once thriving cities, that inspires him. For trees Vergil evidently had a peculiar tenderness. It is impossible here to give any idea in detail of the beauties of his treatment of this subject; of his accurate yet vivid and poetical epithets, his full and joyous descriptions of the associations of fable and romance which in his mind cluster round so many of the trees which he loves. As in the first and the fourth Georgics, Vergil varies his treatment with poetical digressions. In speaking of different kinds of soil, he takes occasion to sing the praises of Italy, a land to his imagination richer than the forests of Media or the plains of the Ganges. Italy is the land of olives and vines, and flocks, of fortresses piled upon steep heights, of rivers flowing under ancient walls, of seas and harbours, and great lakes and harbours; of warlike races, the Marsians, the Sabines, the Ligurians, and the Volscians; of heroes like the Decii, the Camilli, the Scipios, and the Caesars; a land in whose behalf it is well to sing the song of Hesiod, exhorting men to honest labour and to tilling of the soil. We may notice further how bright and life-like is the comparison of the rows of trees in a vineyard to the legion deployed for war, the sheen of its arms quivering in waves of light; how natural the rapture of the poet at the coming of spring, when the winter's cold breaks up, and the tender grass ventures to trust itself to the air as the new suns begins to rise, bringing back a memory of the time when mankind first arose from the soil; how tender his feeling for the young shoots, for the beauty and the shadows of leaves; how he glories in the various uses of trees, the scarlet berries kindling the wild forests where the birds make their home, the pine-trees with their wood for man, the willow and lowly brooms with their shade for cattle; nay, even the forests of the barren Caucasus give pine-wood for ships, cedars and cypress for houses. Happy husbandmen, he adds, if only they knew their own blessings; far indeed from the pomp and luxury of cities, but careless and at ease in their simple life among their caverns and lakes and cool valleys, their youth patient to labour, and content with little. The poet's prayer is, that if it might be so, the sweet Muses would welcome him as their own, and show him the paths of the stars, the laws of eclipse in sun and moon, the causes of earthquakes, of the swellings of the sea. If this cannot be, and his blood is too dull and cold for him to reach this height, let him live in the country, loving its woods, and rivers, and mountains. The philosopher is happy to whom strength is given to know the causes of things, and who has cast beneath his feet all superstition and inexorable death, and the roaring of Acheron insatiable; no less happy is he who can commune with the country and its joys, far from the ambition of the city, from the cares of empire and threats of war, and the crimes and discord of a corrupt generation.

The third Georgic, which treats of the breeding and treatment of sheep, cattle, horses, and dogs, is on the whole less poetical than the preceding books, with the exception of the introduction, of which I shall have more to say anon. The subject is no doubt less attractive to a poet than those of the first, second, and fourth *Georgics*. But Vergil has seized with great power on the points which best admit of imaginative treatment. There is much life and inspiration in the description of the chariot-race (vv. 100–112), of love and its effects on men and animals (209–279), of the Roman soldier marching along under his weary burden (347–349), and of the plague among cattle at the end of the book. But the gem of the *Georgics* is, I think, the fourth. Bee-keeping is said to have been one of the occupations of Vergil's father, and we may therefore possibly credit the poet with some practical knowledge of the subject; in any case it is clear that it was one after his own heart, bringing him back again to his much-loved woods, and streams, and gardens, which we enjoy with him none the less when we find him treating the bees throughout with a charming humour and fancy, speaking of them as a Lilliputian community resembling an active and industrious Italian town, whose citizens are occupied in honest and profitable labour, honouring their king, ready if need be to go out and die with him for their country, while a young generation constantly makes good the losses of their citizens, so that, though individuals perish, the race remains eternal.

This poem, as we now have it, ends with a beautiful episode, the story of the shepherd Aristaeus, to whom fable attributed the invention of a wonderful way of producing bees from a dead heifer. This story passes again into the well-known tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, which Vergil has woven into his narrative with great skill, and related with incomparable beauty and pathos. But this was not the case with the first edition of the fourth Georgic, which, as we are assured on good authority, concluded with an episode in honour of Vergil's friend, the elegiac poet Cornelius Gallus, who, being *præfectus* of Egypt and suspected of harbouring designs against the government of Augustus, fell by his own hand in 26 B.C.

This episode was cut out by Vergil at the instance of Augustus after the fall and suicide of his friend. It is unfortunate that we do not know enough of the circumstances of this act of compliance to judge whether Vergil acted from a feeling of delicacy or from less worthy motives.

The *Georgics* were read by Vergil and Maecenas to Octavianus, when the latter returned finally to Italy in B.C. 29, after settling the affairs of the East. There is no evidence to show exactly when they were begun; but there is a line in the second Georgic (161) alluding to the Julian harbour constructed by Agrippa in 37 B.C. We may therefore assign their commencement to 36 B.C., or, at the earliest, to the end of 37. And we should thus get a period of seven years (36–29) for their composition—the exact time during which Suetonius says that Vergil was engaged upon them.

It is however impossible that they can have been written continuously in the form in which they have come down to us. The historical allusions scattered throughout the work show that Vergil must have written it—as he afterwards did the *Aeneid*—piecemeal. The immortal lines on the murder of Caesar, towards the end of the first Georgic, may well have been written independently, and afterwards inserted in their present position. But I hope I have shown[1] that the lines which conclude the first Georgic, beginning with the words *Di patrii indigetes*, were written either at the end of 33 or the beginning of 32 B.C. This was a time of trouble; the civil war between Antonius and Octavianus, which ended at Actium, was just breaking out; the frontiers of the empire were threatened on east and west; on the east by Phraates, on the west by the Suevi. The tone taken by Vergil is one of doubt and apprehension, and Octavianus is prayed for as the only hope of the falling empire.

The conclusion of the second Georgic was probably written about the same time. In these lines there are allusions which can only be explained on this hypothesis. The Dacians are spoken of as conspiring against the Roman empire; in this expression Vergil probably refers to the support which they gave to Antonius in his final struggle. Other expressions seem to allude to the affairs of the East, and to the intrigues of Antonius[2] with Oriental princes. On the other hand the lines addressed to Caesar in the second Georgic, 171, 2, "Thou, mightiest Caesar, who now victorious in the farthest borders of Asia, art turning back the unwarlike Indian from the hills of Rome," must allude to Octavianus' progress in the East after the battle of Actium (31 B.C.). Much also of the first, second, and third Georgics must have been written in the years between 31 and 29 B.C. if we may trust the verses now placed at the end of the fourth book.[1]

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[1] *Ancient Lives*, &c., p. 55.

[2] Penetrant aulas et limina regum.

But the brilliant introductions to the first and the third Georgics, I incline to think, were not composed until 30 or 29 B.C.; indeed it is possible that they were written for the recitation of 29.[2] It is certainly impossible that the end and the beginning of the first Georgic can have been written in the same year. The conclusion is full of gloom and apprehension; the beginning is a song of triumph in which Octavianus is hailed as a god, the legitimate object of a nation's present and future worship. All this corresponds exactly with what we know of the circumstances of the years 30 and 29. After his successful settlement of the Eastern affairs Octavianus was hailed with all kinds of public distinctions. A number of religious ceremonies were set on foot in his honour; it was decreed that his name should be mentioned among those of the other gods in the public forms of religious service. Vergil then in this introduction to the first Georgic, which some critics have set down as exaggerated or affected in tone, is merely reflecting, in a poetical form, the current popular feeling of the time.

The introduction to the third Georgic may also be very well assigned to the year 29. Its tone corresponds with what we know of the universal joy and holiday-making which characterized that year; and there are distinct allusions to the battle of Actium, to the settlement of the difficulties with Armenia, and to the double victories over the Morini and Dalmatians,[1] who both followed in the triumphal processions of this year.

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[1] Haec super arvorum cultu pecorisque canebam,
Et super arboribus; Caesar dum magnus ad altum
Fulminat Euphraten bello, victorque volentes
Per populos dat iura, viamque adfectat Olympo.

[2] *Ancient Lives*, &c., p. 58 foll.

Much of the *Georgics* was, according to Vergil's own statement at the end of the fourth, written in Naples. But it appears to me possible that before writing the introduction to the third Georgic, in which he speaks of bringing over from Greece her muses and her athletes, he may have travelled to Greece. It is to some extent a confirmation of this view that Horace, in the first book of his Odes, addresses a ship, which is bearing to the shores of Attica a Vergilius, whom he calls the half of his soul. This can hardly be any one but our Vergil.

Of the poetical power with which Vergil handles the details of his difficult subject I have already spoken. In reading the *Georgics* we think not of the duties of agriculture but of its pleasures: of the fresh breath of the ploughed field, of running water, of the deep shadows of the forest, of the kindly mutual services of man and beast. It must be added that in the *Georgics* Vergil's characteristic style, with its wonderful union of learning and originality, has become riper and fuller in expression than in the *Eclogues*. Indeed many critics have been naturally tempted to think the *Georgics* his masterpiece. Vergil had thought and studied much since he wrote the *Eclogues*. The details of his subject he draws mainly from his Greek predecessors, Hesiod, Nicander, and Aratus; but in all that makes true poetry he is far superior to those writers. Another influence is powerfully at work in the *Georgics*, that of Lucretius. There are lines in the first book (415-423) which show that when they were written Vergil was still inclined to believe in the doctrines which he had learned in the school of Siron. However this may be, the language of Lucretius, so bold, so genial, so powerful, and in its way so perfect, is echoed a thousand times in the *Georgics*. Vergil however is no dogmatist: he refuses to break with his much-loved fables, and with the gods of the beautiful old mythology, who, in the fancy of the people and in his own, haunt the rivers and forests and hills. Like Horace, Vergil never committed himself to any one philosophical system; and there are not wanting signs that with all his love for Lucretius, his mind was not wholly in sympathy with the rigour of the Epicurean doctrine and method.

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[1] Bisque triumphatas utroque ab litore gentes.

FOURTH PERIOD—"THE AENEID" (29-19 B.C.).

Vergil had in his youth thought of attempting an epic poem upon Roman history, but had abandoned the idea. At the end of the prelude to the third Georgic he says distinctly that he intends to tell of the battles of Caesar; that is, no doubt, to write a poem on the recent wars in which Octavianus had been engaged. For some reason or other he returned to his original intention of writing on early Roman history; but the plan of his poem was so devised as to represent the fortunes of the Julian family as inseparably bound up with those of the city of Rome. Suetonius says that Vergil's main intention in the *Aeneid* was to include in it the origin both of the city of Rome and of the family of Augustus. This was not difficult at a time when the Roman aristocracy were fond of dabbling in cheap mythology, and connecting themselves by fancied genealogical descent with the worthies of the Grecian epics. Julius Caesar was himself proud of tracing his descent from Venus, through Iulus, the son of Aeneas, the son of Venus: and Aeneas was, according to the story now universally accepted in Italian literary circles, the mythical founder of the empire which had its first seat at Lavinium, and was thence transferred first to Alba Longa and finally to Rome.

The story of the wanderings of Aeneas from Ilium to Italy is a chapter in a large body of fables which must have grown up as the foundation of Greek colonies in Sicily and the south of Italy brought Greece and Italy into nearer contact with each other. Two main features distinguish this mythology from that represented by the Homeric poems. First, the heroes of the Trojan War appear as migrating westward to Sicily and Italy: secondly, they are not like Achilles and Ulysses, the destroyers, but like Aeneas and Antenor, the founders, of cities. Their glory is as much in peace as in war; in law-giving as in conquest.

The story of Aeneas had been treated in poetry by Naevius and Ennius, and manipulated in much detail by historians and antiquarians since their time. Vergil, as we shall see, had his own way of handling it; but before proceeding to consider this it will be well to trace the origin of the legend, and the various forms it assumed in the hands of Greeks and Romans before Vergil's time.

It was some time before Aeneas was brought as far as Italy. In the older forms of the story he remains in Thrace, or in some part of Hellas. With the origin of these older versions, language had, I think, a great deal to do. The name *Aeneas* must mean the son or descendant of Aenus or Aenê. Aenus was the mythical founder of Cyzicus in the Propontis, and we find kindred names attached to cities and tribes. In the Troad there was a township called Aeneia (*Αἴνεια*) and a river Aenion (*Αἴνιον*). Farther west we find a Thracian town named Aenus (*Αἶνος*) at the mouth of the Hebrus, and farther west still Aeneia (*Αἴνεια*) in Chalcidice. South-west of Thessaly there was a tribe called Aenianes (*Αἰνιᾶνες*) or Aenienses; and on the coast of Illyricum a town named Aenona.

In the north-west of Greece, at Leucas, Ambracia, and Actium, and at Elymus in Sicily, there were temples to Aphroditê Aeneias (*'Αφροδίτη Αἰνειάς*), Aphroditê of Aeneia or of Aeneium. A very natural confusion connected these temples, in the course of time, with the hero Aeneas and his mother Aphroditê; wherever Aphroditê Aeneias was worshipped, her son was worshipped at her side. Thus what was originally a merely local epithet contributed towards the story which brought Aeneas, in bodily presence, to the places in question.

The name *Aeneas*, then, so far as we can ascertain, was a local patronymic. It may be observed also that the name of his son, *Ascanius*, is a local name. *Ascanius*, *Ascania*, *Ascaniæ*, and *Ascanium* were names of a city in Aetolia, of a lake near Nicæa, of an island among the Sporades, of a district in Phrygia, of a river in Bithynia, and of some islands off the coast of the Troad. The names therefore both of Aeneas and of his son are closely connected with names of places; Ascanius indeed is not represented as the son of Aeneas by any poet earlier than Stesichorus, who is supposed to have flourished in the last part of the seventh and the beginning of the sixth century B.C. So it is with the name of Aeneas' father, *Anchises; Anchisos* was the name of the harbour-town of Buthrotum in Epirus, and *Anchisia* of a mountain in Arcadia.

Let us now consider in what guise the hero Aeneas appears in the earliest legends with which he is connected. In the Homeric poems he is the son of Aphroditê; he enjoys the protection and favour of Heaven, and his race is destined to endure and to rule after that of Priam has perished. At Gergis, a city in the Troad, a family of Aeneadae (sons of Aeneas) long retained priestly functions, supposed to be a survival of the royal power which they had once held. What was the relation of these Aeneadae with the hero Aeneas it would be rash to pronounce; but in any case it is best to take our start from the places with which Aeneas was said to have been connected. The Greek stories of what befel Aeneas after the capture of Ilium were various and irreconcilable. According to one account he betrayed Troy to the Greeks; according to another he was sent into Phrygia by Priam on military service. The stories, again, which represented him as leaving the city of his fathers did not agree how far he wandered. Some only brought him as far as Pallenê, others took him to Thrace and thence to Arcadia, where one of his companions, Capys, gave his name to the city of Caphyae. Remembering that there was a seaport in Thrace called Aenus, and an Aeneia in Pallenê, we need find no difficulty, considering the contradictory and untrustworthy character of these tales, in attributing the notion of Aeneas' presence in those places solely to their names.

Leaving Thrace and Pallenê, let us consider the traces of the legends which brought Aeneas into other parts of Greece and the Archipelago. He was supposed to have come to Delos while the island was governed by King Anius. A temple of Aphroditê in the island of Cythera seems to have been the centre of a story of his presence there; the promontory of Cinaethium (Κιναίθιον) in the Peloponnese was supposed to have been named after Cinaethus, one of his companions. In Zacynthus a solemn sacrifice to Aphroditê, and athletic contests for young men, kept up a memory of Aeneas as late as the first century A.D.; the founder of Zacynthus was supposed to be a son of the Ilian hero Dardanus and a brother of Erichthonius. Among the athletic contests there was one in particular named after Aphroditê and Aeneas, of whom two wooden statues were kept in the island. In Leucas, Actium, and Ambracia there were, as we have seen, temples to Aphroditê Aeneias; in Ambracia a wooden statue, said to represent Aeneas, was honoured by yearly observances. In Buthrotum was another temple to Aphroditê, the foundation of which was, of course, attributed to Aeneas.

So far we have traced supposed memories of Aeneas in Thrace, in Delos, in Arcadia, in Cythera, on the promontory of Cinaethium, in Zacynthus, in Leucas, Actium, Ambracia, and Buthrotum. Passing on to the south of Italy we meet with legends which brought Aeneas to the promontory of Iapygia inhabited by the Sallentini, and the harbour of Aphroditê near the temple of Athenê; here the Trojans are represented as staying only for a short time before they go on to Sicily.

The legend which brought Trojan settlers to the north-west coast of Sicily, to Elymus, Eryx, and Segesta, was older than the time of Thucydides, who expressly mentions and accepts it. It is of great importance as linking the story of Aeneas on one side with Italy and on the other with Carthage. At Elymus the fable was kept alive by the existence of a temple of Aphroditê Aeneias.

The story of Aeneas' voyages to Latium is undoubtedly later than the legends which we have been considering. A whole chapter of Greek mythology, as we have seen, connected Italy with the wandering heroes who were seeking homes after the destruction of Troy; thus Diomede and Ulysses were brought to the shores of the western seas, and those legends grew up to which Landor in his *Hellenics* has succeeded so well in giving a poetical form and interest. With this cycle of Greek mythology it is natural to connect the stories which brought the Trojans, Aeneas and Antenor, to the west. When Rome became known to the Greeks they claimed her as of Greek extraction. Aristotle knew of a story that Rome was founded by certain Achaeans who, on their return from Troy, were caught in a storm as they were rounding Cape Malea, and were at last carried by the violence of the wind to the coast of Latium. Here they spent the winter, intending to sail with the spring. But some captive women whom they had brought from Ilium, anxious to avoid the slavery which awaited them in Greece, took the opportunity one night of burning the ships, and making further progress impossible. In the same spirit Ulysses and Circê were, by another story, made the parents of Remus, Antias, and Ardeas (names coined from Rome, Antium, and Ardea); or, again, Romulus and Remus were represented as the sons of Latinus, and a Trojan woman called Romê.

Thus Greek writers of the fourth century B.C. claimed for Rome a Greek foundation and mythical Greek connections. There is no symptom[1] yet of any Trojan being represented as playing a prominent part in the drama; the Trojan element is represented only by captive women. But probably in consequence of their wars with Greece, which began at the beginning of the third century B.C., the Romans adopted a different account of their own origin from that which had hitherto been offered by the Greeks. The Greek historian Timaeus, the period of whose literary activity coincides in great part with that of the Roman wars against Pyrrhus, assigned a Trojan origin to the Roman Penates or household gods enshrined at Lavinium. Pyrrhus regarded himself as the descendant of Achilles: the Romans answered by claiming descent from the ancient and inveterate enemies of Greece. Timaeus, after an examination of the Penates of Lavinium, pronounced the clay of which they were made, together with the heralds' staves of brass and iron, to be of Trojan manufacture. It is a marked feature of ancient history that a prominent part was played by the great centres of religious observances, such as Delphi and Olympia, in the work of joining or dissolving alliances between cities and nations. It is a sign of this tendency of feelings and ideas which appears in the claim now laid by the Romans to the Penates or guardian gods of Ilium. Out of this claim arose at once the story of Aeneas' landing in Latium with his household gods. The anti-Grecian interest dominant with the Romans at this time seized upon a religious symbol which was soon made the centre of a developed legend; and the story of the foundation of Rome, not through the instrumentality of Trojan captives, but by the first of the surviving Trojan princes, Aeneas, had assumed full shape by the end of the third century B.C., and formed part of the Roman history of Fabius Pictor.

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[1] It has been supposed that the Greek historian Hellanicus, who wrote about 400 B.C., made Ulysses and Aeneas the founders of Rome: but this cannot be pronounced certain.

Thus, under the pressure of a great national conflict, the Romans called in the aid of a spurious mythology to dignify their cause. Henceforth they cherished the Trojan legend as a matter of public policy, and professed indeed to be guided by it in their dealings with the East. The war with Macedonia was ended in 205 B.C., and in the same year the Romans formed an alliance with Attalus, the ruler of the kingdom of Pergamus in the north-east of Asia Minor. The image of Cybelê, the great mother of the gods, and the guardian deity of Aeneas, was transferred from Pessinûs in Galatia to Rome, where it became a new symbol of the mythical connection between Italy and the East. In the same year the inhabitants of Ilium were included in the peace made between Rome and Macedonia. Other favours to them followed after the war with Antiochus. By the beginning of the second century B.C. the Romans were recognized as *Aeneadae* or sons of Aeneas in the eyes of the world.

Hitherto the legend had been formed and used in an anti-Grecian sense. The case was, however, different in the last century of the republic, after Greece had finally ceased to be an enemy of Rome, and after the Romans had come to regard Greek culture as the main element in their future mental development. In Vergil and in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the Greek historian of Rome in the first century after Christ, the story has changed its complexion, and the Trojans are represented as Hellenes. The loss of the bulk of Varro's works and of much intermediate literature renders it impossible for us to trace the growth of the change. Dionysius is at the greatest pains to prove the truth of Aeneas' arrival in Italy; he quotes many Greek and all the Roman historians on his side, besides a number of oracles, Sibylline and Delphic, and other tokens in the form of local rites and religious traditions. In many places, he says, tombs of Aeneas were shown; and to the dangerous rationalism which suggested that Aeneas could not have died and been buried in more places than one, he replies that this is a difficulty which occurs in the case of many illustrious men, and explains it easily by the consideration that though their bodies can only be in one place, there may be many places where their memories are enshrined. But Dionysius is not only jealous for the truth of the story; he has also his own reading of its signification. As during the wars with Pyrrhus and with Philip, the Romans learned from the story of Aeneas to think of themselves as sprung from a race hostile to Greece, so, now that their quarrels with Greece had been composed, the same legend was made to symbolize the influence of Hellenic civilization upon the Italians. To Dionysius the Trojans are Hellenes, and the Greeks Achaeans (Ἀχαιοί). In his answer to Latinus (Dionys. I. 58) Aeneas says on behalf of himself and his Trojans, "We are Trojans by race, and were citizens of a city among the most conspicuous among the Hellenes; of this we have been deprived, after a ten years' war, by the Achaeans," and so forth. Latinus answers that for his part he is friendly to the whole Hellenic race. The proof of this connection, for the truth of which Dionysius refers generally to old authorities, is rested on the supposed origin of the Trojans from Arcadia. The genealogy given in support of this notion is the same as that which Vergil has put into verse in his eighth Aeneid (134 foll.) And Vergil's selection of proper names in his *Aeneid* is based, in the main, on the principle that the Trojans are Hellenes. His Trojans usually have Greek names, *Actor*, *Amastrus*, *Amycus*, *Anchemolus*, *Antheus*, *Aphidnus*, *Asbutes*, and the like; while the Italian names, *Almo*, *Amata*, *Anxur*, *Aquicolus*, *Arcetius*, *Astur*, &c., are mostly ranged on the side of Turnus. The story of Aeneas' alliance with the Arcadian Evander in the eighth Aeneid points, I need hardly say, in the same direction. And it should be observed that in the eleventh Aeneid Vergil represents the Latins as failing altogether in their attempt to enlist the Greek Diomede on their side against Aeneas.

Such, in brief outline, is the history of the story of Aeneas, as developed by learned Greeks. But though in its main features the legend is Greek, there are, in the version current in Vergil's time, elements of genuine Italian tradition which had been absorbed into the current of the Greek narrative. Starting again from language, we know that the names *Lavinium*, *Laurentum*, *Alba*, *Penates*, *Indiges*, *Diuturna* or *Iuturna*, *Amata* and *Camilla*, which appear in the familiar story, are genuine Italian words, and point back to a condition of politics and religion prior altogether to the time when the Greek tradition was introduced. The Italian centre of the story is not Rome, but Lavinium or Lauro-Lavinium. This town, if not the political, at least the religious, capital of the Latin league, continued down to very late times to preserve living traces of its ancient importance. At Lavinium were the Penates of the Latins and their worship; at Lavinium the consuls, praetors, and dictators offered sacrifice when entering upon or laying down their public offices.

The symbol of the Latin league was a swine with thirty young ones denoting the thirty cities of the confederacy. Varro tells us not only that there were in his days at Lavinium bronze figures of the sow and her young, but that the priests exhibited the actual body of the mother pickled in brine. Now the Latin name for a sow with young was *Troia*. And there was a place in the territory of Laurentum called *Troia*, where Aeneas was supposed to have landed; and in the neighbourhood of Lauro-Lavinium there were remains of an extensive ancient encampment. These facts were readily seized upon by the Greek antiquarians; the sow with her young ones became the guide which led Aeneas to the distant site of his future city: the name *Troia*, apparently quite a genuine Italian word, was identified with the Troy of Homer; the old encampment was the work of Aeneas and his followers. The Penates of Latium was identified with the Great Gods (θεοὶ μεγάλοι) of Samothrace, who were associated with the worship of Aphroditê Aeneias. The Venus to whom there were ancient temples at Antium and Lavinium was Aphroditê, the mother of Aeneas: and Aeneas himself became identified with the *Jupiter Indiges* or native Jupiter of Latium. An old usage of Italian worship, derived no doubt from early rustic custom, according to which squares of bread were used as plates, or trenchers, was embodied in the story. Aeneas, it was said by an oracle, would on landing in Italy be reduced to such straits for food that he and his followers would be obliged to eat their tables. Thus Rome embodied in her own story the mythology of the Latin league, whose political importance she had already destroyed.

Before proceeding to examine the treatment of the story by Vergil, it may be well to say a word of the manner in which it was handled by Roman authors, from Fabius Pictor to Varro. For it is in all probability to Roman rather than to Greek authors that the poet is most indebted. In the version adopted by Fabius Pictor, Aeneas had the whole of his future sufferings and achievements revealed to him in a dream. The story of the swine and her young ones appears in its fully developed form, but the thirty young are interpreted as meaning thirty years, during which Aeneas is to wait before putting his hand to the building of his new city. Fabius Pictor had also the story of the suicide of Amata, the queen of Latinus, though in a different form from that in which it is given in the twelfth Aeneid. Postumius Albinus (about 150 B.C.) attributed the foundation of Baiae, in Campania, to Boia the nurse of Boius, one of the comrades of Aeneas. The poet Naevius derived the name of the island Prochyta from that of the nurse of Aeneas. The elder Cato (B.C. 233-148) was the authority for the Trojan origin of the Veneti in the north-east of Italy, and pursued the story of Aeneas' landing in Latium, and his subsequent fortunes there, in some detail. He attributed to Aeneas the foundation of the Italian village Troia. Towards the end of the second century B.C. Cassius Hemina stated that Aeneas landed in Italy in the second summer after the taking of Troy, and set up his camp with no more than six hundred companions. He brought with him from Sicily an image of Venus which he dedicated to the Italian goddess Venus Frutis. From the Greek hero Diomede, then settled at Arpi, in Calabria, he took the Palladium, or sacred image of Athenê, with which the fortunes of Ilium had been bound up. Arrived in Latium, he reigned for three years in alliance with Latinus, from whom he had received a considerable grant of land, and for two years more, after the death of Latinus, he reigned alone, till he finally disappeared on the banks of the river Numicius, to be worshipped as *Pater Indiges*, or *Father of the country*. The Penates were identified by Cassius with the *θεοὶ μεγάλοι*, or Great Gods of Samothrace. Caelius Antipater, a historian of the same period, attributed the foundation of Capua to Capys, a cousin of Aeneas.

In the last century of the republic the well-known historian Sisenna took up the Trojan story, which was probably treated again in great detail and perfect faith by the great scholar and antiquarian, M. Terentius Varro, the friend and correspondent of Cicero. I have been able to collect a few notices of Varro's utterances on the subject. He represented the Penates, whom he identified with the Great Gods, as wooden or marble figures brought by Aeneas to Italy; originally they had been taken by Dardanus from Samothrace to Phrygia, and afterwards from Phrygia to Italy by Aeneas. The story of the Palladium was treated by Varro in much detail. According to the version which he adopted, the sacred image remained in the hands of Diomede, by whom it was offered to Aeneas while the latter was passing through Calabria. Aeneas also received from Diomede the bones of his father Anchises. In his wanderings, Aeneas was guided by a star, Lucifer, or the Stella Veneris, which moved before him until he arrived in the territory of Laurentum In Dodona he received the oracle which prophesied the famine which should befall him, and the eating of the tables. In Leucas he founded the temple to Venus attributed by the Greek comic poet, Menander, to Phaon the Lesbian. When himself in Epirus, Varro took note of all the places where Aeneas had set his foot, and his list of names was the same as that given by Vergil. He gave details about the progeny of the white sow, whose body, as we have seen, was shown him, preserved in brine, at Lavinium. Anna, the sister of the Carthaginian queen, Dido, perished in the flames of her own funeral pyre for love of Aeneas. The name of *Castrum Laurens* (Laurentian camp) kept alive the memory of Aeneas' camp near Laurentum.

Such are some of the features of the story as it appeared in Varro. I will now briefly examine the account adopted or invented by Vergil, and compare it with the tradition followed by Livy and Dionysius.

The stages of Aeneas' wanderings, as given by Dionysius, are as follows: From Troy he goes to Pallenê, where he leaves some of his sick and weakly followers; thence to Delos, thence to Cythera, thence to Zacynthus, where, owing to old ties of kinship, he is kindly received. Here Aeneas institutes a gymnastic contest for the youth, which still exists. Thence he passes on to Leucas, Actium, Ambracia; from Ambracia, Anchises goes to Buthrotum, and Aeneas to Dodona, where he meets Helenus and the Trojans with him; next to Italy, where a contingent is left to form a settlement on the Iapygian promontory. Meanwhile Aeneas sails to Sicily, where he founds Elymus and Segesta, and leaves part of his own following, and thence on to Italy, where he lands successively at Palinurus, at Leucasia, at Misenum, at Caieta, and at Laurentum.

Compared with this Livy's account is a mere abridgment. He makes only two stages between Troy and Italy, namely, Macedonia and Sicily.

Vergil's account agrees generally so much with that of Dionysius that it is almost certain that both must have drawn independently upon the same sources. Thrace, Delos, Leucas, Buthrotum, Sicily, appear both in the narrative of Dionysius and in that of the third Aeneid: Vergil adds Crete and the islands called Strophades. The story of the burning of the ships by the Trojan women, which we have seen to be as old as Aristotle, is localized by Vergil in Sicily. Dionysius mentions games instituted by Aeneas in Zacynthus: of these Vergil knows nothing, but he devotes a whole book (the fifth Aeneid) to games celebrated in Sicily in honour of Anchises, who, according to his account, had died at Drepanum.

But there are two very important differences between Vergil and the two authors whom we have been considering. Vergil brings Aeneas to Carthage, where he is represented as loving and being loved by Queen Dido, who, on his leaving her, falls by her own hand; he brings him also to Cumae, in Italy, where, by the guidance of the Sibyl, he descends into the regions below the earth and communes with the shade of his father Anchises. A word upon each of these points may not be out of place.

Vergil rightly seized upon the fact that Sicily was the main centre of the story of Aeneas. Legends of a Trojan settlement there had been alive since the fifth century before Christ, and—what was of more importance for Vergil's poetical purposes—Sicily was the meeting point of Rome and Carthage. To bring Rome and Carthage into a mythical connection is the great idea which inspires the first part of the *Aeneid*. With this idea the poem opens, and Vergil has worked it out with a success which was universally acknowledged at his own time, and upon which it is superfluous to dwell now. But it formed no part of the original story of Aeneas' voyage to Italy; for Timaeus asserted that Rome and Carthage were founded on the same day. It seems to have grown up either during or after the Punic wars. Who started the notion, and in what forms it was developed, we do not know; but in some shape or other it was adopted by Naevius, and

Varro must have given it the weight of his authority, for as has been observed above, he represented (not Dido but) Anna the sister of Dido as perishing in the flames for love of Aeneas. It is remarkable that neither Livy nor Dionysius show any knowledge of the story.

Nor, indeed, has Vergil succeeded very well in harmonizing the Sicilian with the Carthaginian episode. The third Aeneid represents what we must regard as the tradition commonly current among the literary men of the time. Aeneas is brought as far as Sicily after a course of wandering which fairly corresponds with that described by Livy and Dionysius. But in order to bring in the Carthaginian elements of the story, Vergil has to carry Aeneas from Sicily to Africa before he can be allowed to go on to Latium. The fifth book as it now stands implies a second visit to Sicily after the tragedy of Carthage. It is difficult to suppose that so awkward a combination as this can have entered into the original plan of the *Aeneid*. Had it not been for the episode of Dido, the fifth book, in which Vergil embodies the old legends which connected Elymus and Segesta with Troy, might easily and naturally have followed the third. I suppose this case to be an illustration of the incomplete state in which, as we shall see, Vergil left his *Aeneid*.

The story of Dido was itself altered by Vergil in a way which is as striking and characteristic as anything in the whole range of his poetry. The tradition as given by Timaeus and universally accepted in Vergil's time was that Dido, who had resolved to remain a widow after the murder of her husband, was pressed, not without threats, by a neighbouring prince, Iarbas, to become his wife. Her own subjects urged her to comply; but she, professing that she was going to perform some rite which should absolve her from her vows, erected a great pile of wood near her palace, which she kindled, and then threw herself into the flames.

Here was matter for a tragedy: but Vergil was not content with the story as it stood. In his fourth book, accordingly, Dido is represented as breaking her vow of constancy for love of Aeneas, and when he, in obedience to divine commands, leaves her and sails for Italy, she falls upon the sword which he had given her, not without uttering a curse, which was fulfilled in the long wars between Rome and Carthage.

The sixth book, in which Aeneas, after consulting the Sibyl of Cumae, descends into the region of spirits and learns from his father's shade what is to be the destiny of his descendants, was written by Vergil partly in obedience to the traditions of the Greek epic poems, of which more will have to be said presently; partly as a tribute to the authority of the so-called Sibylline oracles, a collection of alleged prophecies in which the destinies of Rome were supposed to be foreshadowed.

I have endeavoured to indicate the main points which require notice in the story of Aeneas' wanderings before landing in Latium. The traditions respecting his fortunes after landing also exhibit some discrepancies. One story represented the king of the Latins, Latinus, as resisting the Trojan invaders and as killed in battle with them; another agreed with this story so far as the resistance of the Latins was concerned, but allowed Latinus to survive and make peace and a matrimonial alliance with Aeneas; a third asserted, with some variations of detail, that Latinus never fought with Aeneas at all, but at once gave his daugher in marriage to the Trojan hero. Troubles however begin afterwards. Turnus, a prince of the Rutulian tribe, to whom the hand of Lavinia had been promised, deserts the alliance, and stirs up a war against Latinus in anger for the treatment to which he had been subjected. In the battle which ensues both Turnus and Latinus are killed. Some time after this event Aeneas has to encounter the hostility of an Etruscan prince named Mezentius, whom he conquers and kills in battle.

All this, again, is changed by Vergil. In the *Aeneid*, Latinus first makes an alliance with Aeneas, promising him the hand of his daughter; and then, on the representations of his queen, Amata, and of Turnus, the suitor of Lavinia, breaks it off. In the war which ensues Aeneas obtains the assistance of the Arcadian king Evander and of some Etruscan communities. Turnus is supported by Mezentius and a number of Italian peoples. Mezentius is slain by Aeneas, and the *Aeneid* concludes with the single combat of Aeneas and Turnus. Turnus falls, and Lavinia becomes the wife of the conqueror. Thus the last part of the *Aeneid*, as well as the first, is provided with its element of romance.

The considerations on which I have been dwelling show how difficult a task Vergil had before him when he put his hand to the *Aeneid*. The traditions on which alone he could base his poem had neither form nor life. Aeneas had never, so far as we can see, not even in the Homeric poems, been represented as a hero in the sense in which the word can be used of Achilles, or Ulysses, or Ajax, or Diomede. Even in Homer the divine protection of his mother and of Apollo hangs heavily around him. In the places where he is worshipped he is little but a name; a shadowy demi-god associated with the worship of Aphroditê. As a founder of cities he has no characteristics to distinguish him from his many fabulous compeers in that office. The Homeric heroes do not found cities, but destroy them; the idea of a civilizing and beneficent hero, on which Dionysius dwells, hardly exists in the ancient Greek epic, and belongs to another and a more reflective stage of mythology. Vergil, however, could do no more than use such elements as were given him in the current tradition. To make out of so shadowy a being as the Aeneas of legend a hero of war and peace, fit to be the founder of an imperial city, was no easy task; and difficult as it was, it was still further complicated by the literary principles which governed Vergil's composition.

All Latin literature since Naevius had, as we have seen, been based upon the imitation of Greek models; but it is clear that in the opinion of Vergil and Horace the study of Greek had not been close and careful enough. These twin poets enjoined a more conscientious application to this study than had ever been given before. The Roman poet must, they thought, work himself thoroughly into the principles on which Homer and Aeschylus and Sophocles composed their masterpieces: his arrangement and the caste of his characters must be theirs; his very language might with advantage be made melodious with Greek forms and Greek inflections. Only thus, thought Horace and Vergil, could the Latin tongue acquire the dignity and harmony of which in poetry it was capable. Before all things therefore Vergil set himself to model his epic on the type of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The first six books of the *Aeneid*, describing Aeneas' wanderings from Troy to Latium, were to be his *Odyssey;* the second six, containing the description of his conflicts in Latium, were to be his *Iliad*. Besides this, Vergil strengthened himself with subsidiary studies in the Epic Cycle, the Greek Tragedy, and the Alexandrian Epic of Apollonius Rhodius. The *Aeneid* is therefore a poem of which the main idea is Roman, the mythology a bastard mixture of Greek and Italian, and the arrangement and handling wholly Greek.

Full of his idea that Rome and Carthage must, even in their mythical fore-time, be brought into relation, Vergil, plunging at once into the heart of his subject, begins by describing Aeneas and his followers as thrown by a storm on the coast of Africa near Carthage. They are in the dominions of Dido, who is engaged in the act of building her new city. Dido takes pity on the fugitives, and on learning who Aeneas is, offers him and his followers a settlement in her dominions. At a royal banquet given by Dido to her guest Aeneas relates the story of the fortunes which brought him to Carthage. This episode occupies two books, the second, in which Aeneas tells how Troy was taken, and the third, in which his wanderings between

Troy and Carthage are recounted. The tale of heroic achievement and sufferings does its work ; the queen, who has vowed eternal constancy to her dead husband Sychæus, now loves Aeneas, and he for his part would fain remain with her and share the Carthaginian kingdom. But it is the will of the gods that the Roman Empire shall be founded not in Africa but in Italy, and should be not the friend but the enemy of Carthage ; and Aeneas is quickly bidden to remember his high mission and depart. The deserted queen, her vows broken and her love despised, falls upon the sword which Aeneas has given her. Aeneas is driven by a storm back to Sicily, where he celebrates games in honour of his dead father Anchises. The Trojan women try to burn his ships and put an end to the long wandering; but this catastrophe is averted by divine interference, and Aeneas goes on, to found a new city, leaving in Sicily all whose age or inclination makes it advisable to take them no further. Arrived at Cumae, Aeneas consults the Sibyl, who after prophesying to him in dark riddles the stormy time that awaits him in Latium, conducts him to the abode of the dead, where Anchises predicts to him the fortunes of his descendants, and shows him in Elysium the souls who are hereafter to become the worthies of the Roman republic.

The course of events is represented in Homeric fashion as the result of rival wishes and interests among the gods. The bitter enemy of Aeneas and his fortunes is Juno : she it is who stirs up the storm which drives him to the shore of Africa, she who moves the Trojan women to burn the ships in Sicily. The friends of Aeneas are his mother Venus, and Jupiter himself, the king of gods and men, whose fixed decree it is that in spite of all opposition the Roman Empire shall arise on the banks of the Tiber. It is Venus who, in short-sighted alarm for the fortunes of her son when on African soil, enters into a compact with Juno, according to which Dido's heart is to be inclined towards Aeneas.

But not only the outer framework of the story, but its minutest details are taken from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* Much of the first book, for instance, recalls the meeting of Odysseus with Nausicaa. The general idea of a great hero being taken captive by love of a strange woman was probably suggested by the story of Odysseus and Calypso, though in some of the details Vergil followed the story of Jason and Medea in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius. The games in the fifth book closely resemble the games described in the *Iliad* as set on foot by Achilles in honour of Patroclus; while the descent of Aeneas into the world of spirits was suggested by the eleventh Odyssey, where Odysseus visits the land of shadows and communes with the soul of his mother. Much of the third book, again, is directly borrowed from the narrative of the *Odyssey.*

In the second book, in which the fall of Ilium is described in immortal verse, Vergil must, if we may trust fragmentary indications,[1] have drawn largely upon the writers of the Epic Cycle, especially upon Arctinus. In the fourth book another Greek influence is at work, that of the Greek tragedy. The fall of Dido is represented as the consequence of human passion setting itself in opposition to the fixed ordaining of Heaven. "Seest thou," says Athenê to Odysseus in the *Ajax* of Sophocles, "seest thou the power of the gods, how great it is?" Ajax falls for no intelligible offence, but because the gods will that Odysseus should be the stronger. Hippolytus in Euripides will not acknowledge the power of Aphroditê; she brings him, though innocent beyond example, to a fearful end. Orestes is driven mad by the Eumenides because he fulfils the command of other gods in slaying his guilty mother. This is the rude religious conception on which much of the Greek tragedy is based. As I have said elsewhere,[2] "the natural moral feelings seem to be playing round undiscovered centres; the powers at work are not commensurate with our ideas of the powers of right and its reverse, and the righteous issue, as we understand it, is but dimly discerned, if discerned at all, by the straining eye." On these lines Vergil has drawn his picture of the catastrophe which befalls Dido. Brought by Venus to the breaking of her vow, she suffers the full curse which she has invoked upon herself if she should do so; her new love is a broken reed, and maddened by despair, abandoned by the gods, she meets her inevitable doom.

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[1] See *Suggestions Introductory to a Study of the Aeneid*, p. 28.

[2] *Suggestions*, &c., p. 35.

I said above that the sixth Aeneid, in which the descent of Aeneas into the world of spirits is described, was suggested by the eleventh Odyssey; and this is true of its general outline and some details of the narrative. But the view or views of a future life embodied in the sixth Aeneid are far in advance of the simpler ideas of the Homeric poem. Instead of a dreary neutral land of shadows, the greatest of whom would sooner be a servant among the living than a king among the dead, we have a region where the consequences of a man's life on earth follow him for good and for evil. There is a limbo to which are consigned all whose life was cut off before its time, infants, suicides, the unjustly condemned, those who have fallen in battle. There is a hell of eternal punishment for the wicked who have done violence to their parents, deceived their clients, committed adultery, withheld property from their rightful heirs, or (being slaves) have taken up arms against their masters. There is an Elysium of eternal happiness in which are those who have benefited mankind by arts and inventions, or have made men mindful of them by their good deeds; the pure-minded poets are here who have sung strains worthy of the god who inspires them, and other virtuous and noble souls. Among these some, after purification undergone, remain for ever in Elysium, the greater number pass again into human bodies to live new lives upon earth.

The great idea of a future life, in which rewards and punishments await the innocent and the guilty, is thus put side by side with the theory of transmigration. The two theories are inconsistent, nor can it be said that the poet has been at much pains to give them a semblance of reconciliation. Vergil's object is rather to seize and embody in his *Aeneid* whatever ideas seemed to him capable of poetical treatment. Whatever the faults of his logic, his luminous and majestic verse has presented these great thoughts in a way which more than satisfies the imagination. His picture of the home of departed spirits is, in all its most important features, drawn from Plato; and there are touches which seem to show that he had studied the so-called Orphic poems, and possibly that his imagination had been affected by the spectacles shown to the initiated in the mysteries of Eleusis.[1] Complex, however, as is the web of learning and various associations of philosophy and literature, of which the sixth Aeneid is constructed, it stands in a clear poetical relation to the preceding books and to the character of Aeneas as conceived by Vergil. The foundation of the Roman Empire has been treated throughout as ordained by a divine decree, in the fulfilment of which Aeneas is the human instrument. As a king and lawgiver Aeneas must be initiated into the highest thoughts on the highest of all subjects; as a son he receives the initiation from his father's lips.

Thus the first half of the *Aeneid* ends in vision and prophecy. The last half contains the tale of the hero's fortunes and struggles on Italian ground. On landing in Latium (so the seventh book begins) Aeneas sends an ambassador to king Latinus asking for an alliance with him. Latinus offers Aeneas his friendship and the hand of his daughter; for before this time divine oracles, widely known throughout the Italian cities, had forbidden the king to give away his child to any one but a foreigner, who was to lay the foundation in Latium of a world-wide empire. The treaty is concluded and the marriage agreed upon: but new and disturbing forces soon come into play. Among the suitors of Lavinia, the daughter of Latinus, the foremost had been Turnus, the prince of the Rutulians. Renowned for beauty, bravery, and nobility of descent, he is favoured by Amata, the king's wife. Juno, calling the powers of hell to her aid, works upon the passions of the suitor and the queen. They stir up the hostile feelings of the Italians against the strangers; a trivial incident kindles a general conflict; and Latinus, though his purpose remains unshaken, is overborne by the violence of Turnus and his followers, and is forced to retire into his palace and resign the control of affairs. The seventh book concludes with a list of the chiefs and peoples who came to the assistance of Turnus.

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[1] See *Suggestions*, &c., p. 45.

We have been introduced to Turnus, and the rude but warlike Italian tribes who follow him. In the eighth book Vergil returns to Aeneas, who, after the turn which events have taken, makes for the Arcadian settlement at Pallanteum and asks for the assistance of its king, Evander. Evander, who is celebrating a festival to Hercules, welcomes Aeneas as a prince of the same race as himself, and readily concludes the alliance. This done, Aeneas is visited by his goddess-mother, who brings him a suit of armour fashioned by the hands of the god of fire. On the shield are engraved pictures representing various scenes in the history of Rome, and in the midst the battle of Actium, and the triple triumph of Augustus.

Aeneas goes on from Pallanteum to ask for succour from Etruria. His absence brings his followers into considerable danger. Turnus besieges them in their camp, and would have set fire to their fleet had not Cybelê, the mother of the gods and protector of Aeneas, changed the ships into as many nymphs. The battle rages on around the walls: Turnus enters the city, but is obliged to escape by plunging into the Tiber. During the siege Nisus and Euryalus make their way out of the camp at night with the idea of going to Pallanteum and bringing Aeneas back. After dealing slaughter among the allies of Turnus, whom they surprise in their sleep, they are themselves overtaken and slain by a party of Volscian horsemen.

The tenth book brings Aeneas back to his beleaguered camp, with fresh assistance from Etruria. The siege is raised after a sharp conflict, in which Pallas the son of Evander is killed by Turnus, while Mezentius and his son Lausus are slain by Aeneas. Thus the fortune of war begins to turn in favour of the Trojans. And the sense of this fact raises the dormant opposition of that party among the Latins which has, from the first, been hostile to Turnus and his designs. The depression of the Latins is increased on the return of the ambassadors who had been sent to ask succour from Diomede. Their mission has been vain; no aid can be obtained from the Greek against Aeneas. Latinus calls a council, in which he proposes to come to terms with Aeneas. Drances insists that the responsibility of the war rests on the head of Turnus alone, and that he should meet Aeneas in single combat if he claim for himself the first honours of the Italian kingdom. Turnus has hardly finished his reply when the alarm is spread that the Trojan army is approaching. He seizes the opportunity, hurries from the council, and makes his dispositions for war. But his designs do not prosper: one of his chief allies, the warrior maiden Camilla, is slain, after a series of glorious deeds, by the arrow of a Ligurian.

The hopes of Turnus being thus broken, nothing remains for him to do but to redeem the promise boastfully made in answer to the taunts of Drances. He must meet Aeneas in single combat: no other way is open for settling the quarrel and restoring peace to his country. The twelfth book opens with the picture of Turnus, violent, distracted, disdainful, making his proposals for a solemn compact according to which Aeneas and himself are to fight out their quarrel alone. Latinus and Amata endeavour in vain to dissuade him: the preliminaries of the combat are ratified with prayer and sacrifice, and all is ready for the final consummation, when the covenant is broken by the Rutulians and the leaders friendly to Turnus. The augur Tolumnius makes a direct attack upon the Trojans. Aeneas, who has been endeavouring to restrain his men, is himself wounded; and Turnus, seeing him retire from the battle, seizes the opportunity to put himself at the head of his soldiers and follow up the action of Tolumnius. Thus the covenant is ingloriously broken; the battle rages on until Aeneas threatens to destroy the faithless city of Latinus. Turnus is at length aroused. He will not go to join the spirits of his ancestors with the stain of cowardice upon him; and when the maddening conflict of emotion has ceased, he goes to meet certain death at the hand of his heaven-protected adversary.

Such in brief outline is the story of the last six books. Its outward structure is, even down to the minutest details, Homeric. Aeneas corresponds to the Achilles of the *Iliad*, Turnus to Hector, Drances to Polydamas, Camilla to Penthesileia. The idea of the divinely-fashioned shield of Aeneas is taken from the shield of Achilles: the episode of Nisus and Euryalus from the night attack by Odysseus and Diomede in the tenth Iliad: the danger of the Trojans' camp in Aeneas' absence is the danger of the Greek camp before Troy while Achilles refuses his aid. More than this, Vergil's battle-pieces are modelled in their smallest circumstances on those of Homer; and so it is with his similes. Everything shows the minutest study of the Homeric language and treatment. It can easily be imagined how often this devotion to the Greek epic has spoiled the freshness and spontaneousness of Vergil's writing. But in thus studying and using Homer as no Roman poet had studied and used him before, Vergil thought that he was doing no more than his duty to Latin literature. I have observed above that he and his friend Horace thought this never-ceasing labour on the great master-pieces of Greek literature to be the main condition of success in bringing Latin writing to perfection. That they were right in principle there can be no doubt; yet Vergil's work has suffered by a too rigid adherence to the rules which he had laid down for himself.

But in all that concerns the inner side of his story and its development Vergil shows the originality of his genius in a striking light. The idea on which the *Aeneid* is constructed is thoroughly Roman; here at least there is no Greek influence at work. In one sense of the word, the Romans were a religious nation; they held to the belief that the progress of their empire was ordained by Heaven, and that success in their mission depended on due service rendered to the Gods. "Other nations,"[1] said Cicero, "may surpass us in this accomplishment or that; the Spaniards are more numerous, the Gauls have more physical strength, the Carthaginians are more cunning, the Greeks are better artists, the Italians and Latins have a more genuine national feeling: but in piety and religion, and the true and unique philosophy which teaches that the world is governed and directed by a Providence, we surpass all other nations and peoples." "Thou dost govern," says Horace to the Roman, "because thou confessest that the gods are greater than thou."[2] Nothing can be clearer than the way in which this idea pervades the *Aeneid*. The mission of Aeneas to conquer and civilize the ruder tribes of Italy is imposed upon him by Jupiter himself. He meets indeed with resistance and struggle: but this comes from the inferior deities acting on the lower human passions. We have seen how in its later stages the story of Aeneas came to symbolize the introduction of Hellenic civilization into Italy. In Vergil's hands it embodies a conception parallel to this. Aeneas is the king, priest, and lawgiver, who brings to a barbarous race the blessings of laws, moral habit, and religion. The Italian tribes are warlike and devoted to their chiefs; but the manners of these chiefs are rude and barbarous.[1] Mezentius, the despiser of the gods, is a tyrant, a leader of robbers, whose custom it is to kill their captives by tying them to corpses. Ufens the leader of the Aequi is chief of a race who never lay aside their arms even to cultivate the ground, and whose delight it is to gather spoil and live by plunder. The same is true of Remulus the brother-in-law of Turnus. Metabus the father of Camilla has been expelled from his own city for deeds of violence; the brave Amazon his daughter, who is intended to recall the character of Penthesileia in the Epic cycle, is a model rather of rude hardihood than of romantic daring; Turnus himself, with all his bravery and devotion to his love, has many of the qualities of a barbarian. He is incapable of sacrificing his own inclination to the public interest. Towards friend and foe alike who attempt to cross his path he is arrogant in language and demeanour; his acts are often violent and headstrong, and at least on one great occasion fall lamentably behind his professions.

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[1] *De Haruspicum Responsis*, 9, 19.

[2] Dis te minorem quod geris, imperas.

Thus does Vergil subordinate the course of his narrative to his main conception. How much of the detail of the story is his own, how much is borrowed from the accounts current at his time, cannot be ascertained with certainty. But there is no doubt that the character assigned to Mezentius and his followers is the same as that which they bore in the Greek tradition reported by Aristotle; and Turnus is called by Tibullus[2] a barbarian, and by Dionysius a deserter, who abandons the alliance with Aeneas to which he and his people were committed.

In conformity with this main idea Vergil represents some of the persons who take a leading part in opposing the mission of Aeneas as perishing in a blind infatuation sent upon them by the gods. Thus it is with Dido, thus it is with Amata the mother of Turnus, thus it is with Turnus himself. On their side is passion, confusion, error, violence, perfidy; on the side of Aeneas is dependence on heaven, temperance, mercy, good faith, reverence for law. And interwoven with all this in Vergil's narrative is an evident feeling of sympathy with the national religion of the Romans, which Augustus was attempting to restore, and of antipathy to the wild forms of Eastern superstition. Of this perhaps the most striking illustration may be found in the description of the battle of Actium at the end of the eighth book, where the contest is represented as a battle not only between Antonius and Augustus, but between Roman and foreign deities; of Neptune, Venus, and Minerva, against the dog Anubis and the monsters whom the Egyptians worshipped.

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[1] See *Suggestions*, &c., p. 11, foll.

[2] 2. 5. 48.—Iam tibi praedico, barbare Turne, necem.

Vergil was engaged upon the *Aeneid* from 29 to 19 B.C. We have the testimony of Suetonius that he first drafted it in prose, and then wrote different parts in no certain order, but just as the fancy took him. The division into twelve books was part of his original plan.

If my hypothesis about the introduction to the third Georgic is correct, Vergil cannot have begun the *Aeneid*, or even have made up his mind to write epic poetry in that form, before the year 29. For at the end of that introduction he says that he is intending to celebrate the wars of Octavianus. This must refer not to the *Aeneid*, but to a work which, if he ever began it, he never completed. It is just possible, indeed, that the description of the battle of Actium at the end of the eighth Aeneid may have been originally intended to form part of this poem; but this is no more than conjecture.

However this may be, the small circle of friends to whom Vergil was in the habit of reading his poems soon spread the report that a great work was coming to the birth. One of these friends, the poet Propertius, whose writings show decided traces of intimacy with Vergil,[1] was bold enough to predict that "something greater than the *Iliad* would soon appear."[2] Some of this talk must have reached the ears of Augustus; for in the year 26, when he was absent in Spain on a campaign against the Cantabrians, he wrote Vergil a half-threatening, half-playful letter, asking him to send him either the first draft of the *Aeneid*, or any passage out of it that he pleased. Vergil's answer is characteristic. "The subject I have attempted is so vast that I think I must have been mad to put my hand to it; and you know that there are other and more important studies, which I must give to it."[3]

It was not until three or four years afterwards that Vergil would consent to read three books, two of which were certainly the fourth and the sixth, to Augustus. The date of this recitation is approximately fixed by a melancholy event,—Marcellus, the young nephew of Augustus and heir to the empire, died in 23 B.C. In the sixth book Vergil inserted some exquisite lines to his memory, on hearing which Octavia, the young prince's mother, is said to have fallen into a swoon. But there is at least one line in the sixth book (794) where Augustus is spoken of as conquering the Indian tribe of the Garamantes, which must have been added in the year 19, when the event in question took place. A line in the seventh book (606), in which there is a mention of demanding from the Parthians the restoration of the standards taken from Crassus, may have been written in the same year, which was that of Vergil's death.

Some light as to the order in which the books of the *Aeneid* were composed may be derived from the inconsistencies in the narrative as it now stands. In the third book the wanderings of Aeneas between Ilium and Carthage are represented as lasting two and a half or three years; in the first and fifth as lasting seven. Vergil must at different times have taken up different versions of the story, and was overtaken by death before he could decide which to adopt.

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[1] See *Ancient Lives*, &c., p. 67.

[2] Nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade. See *Ancient Lives*, &c., pp. 63, 67.

[3] De *Aenea* quidem meo, si mehercule iam dignum auribus haberem tuis, libenter mitterem; sed tanta incohata res est ut paene vitio mentis tantum opus ingressus mihi videar, cum praesertim, ut scis, alia quoque studia ad id opus multoque potiora impertiar.—Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 24. 11.

We know nothing of the time when the first Aeneid was written; but there can be little doubt that the third was written before the second. At the end of the second book Creusa, the wife of Aeneas, is said to have appeared to him after her death, and prophesied his arrival in Italy and the rise of his kingdom there. Yet in the third book, which is supposed to continue the narrative of the second, there is no mention of Creusa and her prophecy. Aeneas seems entirely to have forgotten it, and is consequently led into making a journey to Crete, only to learn that Crete was not the place where Apollo would have him settle. I am inclined indeed to think that the third book was the first which Vergil wrote. It contains a complete and independent story, which is not harmonised with other parts of the work, and the style is in parts weaker than that of the rest of the *Aeneid.*

There is reason for believing that the fifth book was written somewhat late. The ninth, at least, must have been finished before it. For in the ninth Nisus and Euryalus, the heroes of the night-attack, are introduced as if nothing had been heard of them before; whereas in the fifth book they play a prominent part in the games.

Nor, again, does the fifth book agree well with the fourth and sixth. These two books were, as we have seen, sufficiently finished by the year 23 or 22 for Vergil to read them to Augustus. They form a continuous and consistent narrative: Aeneas, as is natural, sails straight from Carthage to Italy; and among the dead he sees Dido fresh from the slaughter. The fifth book takes Aeneas back to Sicily, where he stays some time celebrating games in honour of the dead Anchises. I have already remarked how awkward is this method of handling the Sicilian story; and it may be observed, further, that in one important detail the fifth book differs from the sixth. This is the account of the death of the steersman Palinurus. In the fifth book he is drowned in a calm sea by the agency of a god: in the sixth he is represented as having fallen from the helm to which he was clinging in fear of the rough weather threatening the ship. Vergil must surely have written the account in the sixth book first, and subsequently forgotten to harmonize it with the other.

V.

VERGIL'S DEATH.—HIS CHARACTER.

THE *Aeneid* was never finished. In his fifty-second year (B.C. 19) Vergil intended to travel in Greece and Asia Minor, and to devote three years to the correction and completion of his great work. He had proceeded as far as Athens, when he met Augustus, who was then returning to Rome from the East. Vergil changed his mind, and decided to go back with the emperor. Before starting however he went, on a very hot September day, to see the neighbouring town of Megara. He fell ill, and was worse when, after an uninterrupted voyage, he landed at Brundisium. Here he died, a few days after his arrival, on the 21st of September, B.C. 19. His ashes were taken to Naples and buried in a tomb nearly two miles on the road to Puteoli. On the tomb were inscribed two lines, said to have been written by Vergil himself: "Mantua was my mother, Calabria took me hence, Parthenope is now my home; I have sung of pastures, of the country, and of chieftains."[1]

If we may believe his biographers, Vergil had amassed, from the presents of Augustus and other friends, a fortune of some 90,000*l*. Of this he left half to his half-brother Valerius Proculus, a quarter to Augustus, a twelfth part to Maecenas, and the rest to his friends Varius and Tucca.

Before leaving Italy Vergil had commissioned Varius, in case anything should happen to him, to burn his *Aeneid*. Varius had naturally refused; and Vergil in his last hours constantly begged his friends to bring him the manuscript, meaning to burn it himself. But his friends were not so foolish, and Vergil, as a last resource, left all his writings as a legacy to Varius and Tucca on the understanding that they were to publish nothing which he had not published himself. This request was of course disregarded, and Varius and Tucca, with the authority of Augustus, edited the *Aeneid*, with such corrections only as were absolutely necessary. Vergil had left a number of lines unfinished, which however, with only one exception, were, as far as the sense goes, complete. These were left by Varius and Tucca just as they found them.

Vergil's life, unlike that of his friends Gallus and Asinius Pollio, was uneventful; he took no active part in the politics or warfare of his time.[2] Of his character we consequently know very little. He is described as tall, dark, and of a rustic appearance. His habits were those of a student. It would seem that he was singularly slow of speech; a fact which would at once disqualify him for public life of any kind. His health too was infirm; he suffered from weakness of the throat and stomach, and was liable to headaches and spitting of blood. He studied much, and not only philosophy, poetry, and mythology, but astrology and medicine. He was temperate in his habits, and so retiring that he avoided Rome so far as he could, and when there shunned as much as possible the gaze and admiration of the public. A great poet was liable to be followed and pointed out in the street; when this happened to Vergil, it is said that he would run away into the nearest house. His appearance was so modest and maidenly that some one at Naples nicknamed him Parthenias, a rough and punning Greek equivalent for the Italian Vergilius. What we know of his character is to his credit. Horace speaks of him as a most transparent and lovable soul; and all indications tend to show that his friends were much attached to him. Of his gratitude to Varus, Pollio, Gallus, and Maecenas, the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* are an abiding testimony. There is no real evidence to show that the *Aeneid* was undertaken either at the suggestion or at the command of Augustus; but there is, as we have already seen, much in the poem which was intended to do honour both to the Julian family and to its chief representative. It is honourable to him that when Augustus offered him the confiscated estate of an exile, whose name has not reached us, Vergil refused to accept it.

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[1] Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc
Parthenope; cecini pascua, rura, duces.

[2] His description of himself at the end of the fourth Georgic, *studiis florentem ignobilis oti*, will apply to his whole life.

Vergil had a house at Rome in a fashionable part, but was seldom there, preferring mostly to live in the comparative quiet of Sicily and Campania.

The elaboration of his style would lead us to expect that he was a slow worker, and this appears to have been really the case. When writing the *Georgics* we are told that he would dictate a great number of verses in the morning, and spend the rest of the day in reducing them to the smallest possible quantity, licking them, as he himself said, into shape, as a bear does its cub. In composing the *Aeneid* he was less careful, not always stopping to finish the part on which he was engaged. Some places he left altogether incomplete, in others he inserted makeshift lines, "mere supports," as he said, "to keep the building up till the stone pillars should arrive." It was no doubt the consciousness of these mechanical imperfections, and the knowledge that the various parts of the story had not been brought into harmony, which made him wish to burn his *Aeneid.* That he thought himself unequal to writing epic poetry, as some critics have imagined, I cannot suppose for a moment.

Though slow in conversation, Vergil was a beautiful reader. His manner of recitation is said to have been sweet and wonderfully attractive; so much so, that a contemporary poet, Julius Montanus, said that verses, which in themselves seemed flat and dumb, sounded well when he read them; such was the charm of his voice, pronunciation, and gestures. We know how deeply Octavia was affected by his reading of the lines about Marcellus.

VI.

ESTIMATE FORMED OF VERGIL'S POETRY DURING HIS OWN LIFE-TIME, AND SOON AFTER HIS DEATH.

THE *Aeneid* must have been well known both to friends and enemies before Vergil's death. He used to read the passages about which he was most doubtful to persons whose judgment he respected, with the express intention of sounding their opinions and inviting criticism. One of his candid friends was, apparently, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, the celebrated minister of Augustus. He charged Vergil's style with affectation; not, however, the affectation of grandeur or meanness, but that of simplicity. By using ordinary words in new collocations Vergil, he said, spoke in a false tone which, owing to the means by which it was produced, was difficult of detection. Others blamed Vergil for taking so much from Homer; stealing, as they called it. Vergil challenged them in return to steal from Homer if they could. "You will find it easier to rob Hercules of his club than Homer of a single verse." How much of Vergil's theory of poetry is summed up in this little sentence! But he was sincere in his desire for criticism, and meant, had life been spared him, to have corrected his work, so far as possible, to the satisfaction of his detractors.

His generosity and candour would probably have availed but little against their spite. The *Eclogues* had been met at the time of their publication with a stupid parody by one Numitorius, whose *Antibucolica* seems to have contained insinuations that Vergil's style could not be called Latin. His alleged faults were collected into a volume by a certain Herennius, his "plagiarisms" by Perellius Faustus. All his translations from the Greek, with their originals, were published in eight volumes by Q. Octavius Avitus. Carvilius Pictor wrote a work called *Aeneidomastix*, or *Whip to Flog the Aeneid*, no doubt on the analogy of the *Homeromastix* of Zoilus, and the *Ciceromastix* mentioned at the beginning of the seventh book of Aulus Gellius. These works seem to have been extant in the time of Suetonius. I think it probable that fragments of them remain in the commentaries of Servius and Macrobius, written towards the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth centuries after Christ, and will therefore mention briefly the chief counts on which the accusers of Vergil founded their indictment.

Vergil appears to have been attacked mainly for his innovations in language, for his handling of his materials, for his close imitation of Homer, and for ignorance of religious antiquities. Let us briefly consider the charges brought against him under each of these heads, and the answers that were made to them.

In a very interesting passage in his *Art of Poetry*, which, there is now reason to think, was written while the *Aeneid* was in progress, Horace says, "If any one makes himself responsible to the public by promising a new poem, let him be nice and cautious in combining his words, accepting one combination and rejecting another. You will deserve much praise if, by a skilful collocation you make an old word sound new. And if you are obliged to devise new expressions for things which are remote from the common track, you will be allowed to coin words which our ancestors never heard of, and no one will complain of the license allowed you if you use it with modesty. Your new creations will pass current if they come from a Greek original, with sparing alterations. Why are Vergil and Varius to be forbidden what is allowed to Caecilius and Plautus? Why should men envy me if I can add something to the common store, when Cato and Ennius enriched their mother tongue and brought new words into being?"[1]

There are two points here: one, that a poet may make an old word sound new by a new combination; the other, that he may introduce new words of a Greek stamp for things abstruse and remote from common usage. Vergil was attacked for both these proceedings. We find, for instance, an ancient comment on his phrase *tendit iter velis*, "he speeds with sails his journey:" *velis*, it was remarked, was not the same as *per vela*, "by means of sails." Critics asked for an explanation of the phrase *virgulta sonantia lauro*, "branches crackling with laurel," instead of "crackling branches of laurel." "A murky smell" (*ater odor*) for "a smell of murky smoke," was remarked on as an unprecedented expression. It is not impossible that these, and similar cases, were in the mind of Horace when he said that a new combination would give new life to an old word, and in Agrippa's when he blamed Vergil for having invented a new kind of affectation by his strange use of ordinary language.

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[1] *Ars Poetica*, 45 foll.—

In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis,
Hoc amet, hoc spernat promissi carminis auctor.
Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit iunctura novum. Si forte necesse est
Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum,
Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis
Continget, dabiturque licentia sumpta pudenter,
Et nova fictaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, si
Graeco fonte cadent, parce detorta. Quid autem?
Caecilio Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademptum
Vergilio Varioque? Ego cur, acquirere pauca
Si possum, invideor, cum lingua Catonis et Enni
Sermonem patrium ditaverit, et nova rerum
Nomina protulerit?

Vergil's predilection for Greek words was too obvious not to be remarked. Not only, it was observed, did he give Greek titles to all his poems, *Bucolica*, *Georgica*, *Aeneis*, but he filled his verses with Greek expressions, and sometimes allowed himself the Greek in preference to the Latin form of declension. Such words were *aethra*, *lychni*, *daedalus*, *reboant*, *dius*, *chorea*, *hyalus*; sometimes whole verses were filled with Greek sounds, as *flerunt Rhodopeiae arces*, *Atque Getae*, *atque Hebrus*, *et Actias Orithyia; Amphion Dircaeus in Actaeo Aracyntho; Thyias, ubi audito stimulant trieterica Baccho Orgia*, *nocturnusque vocat clamore Cithaeron.*

But this was not all. Vergil was charged with using "barbarian" expressions, that is, expressions that were not Latin. And it may well be that he allowed himself to use some words which, though familiar to him in his country district, would grate on a cultivated Roman ear. We find it noticed that his word for a buffalo, *urus*, was a Gallic word, and that *camurus*, "crooked" or "crumpled," was foreign. A contemporary poet was severe on him for saying *hordea*, "barleys," for *hordeum*, "barley;" *Hordea qui dixit superest ut tritica dicat;* "If you say *barleys* you will be saying *wheats* next."

Vergil was further charged with using ordinary Latin words in a wrong way, as for instance *vexare* of Scylla tearing in pieces the ships that came within her reach; with coining new compounds, such as *inaccessus*, *indubitare*, *imperditus*; and with giving new senses to ordinary words, as to *agmen*, which he uses of a river (*leni fluit agmine Thybris*).

No doubt Vergil and his friends considered that he had satisfactory answers to give his critics on all these points; and to a certain extent we know what those answers were. Horace's remarks about the poet's right to make new combinations of ordinary words may be taken in some sense as a general answer to Agrippa's charge of affectation; though it would be rash to assert that Horace intended it as such. I have not been able to discover many instances of criticism which can be said to fall under this head; still less is it possible to know how Vergil would have replied upon each detail. Several instances of new combinations made by Vergil are quoted in the sixth book of Macrobius, such as *tepidaque recentem Caede locum*, where the remarkable phrase is *recens caede*, fresh with slaughter; *socii cesserunt aequore iusso*, where *iussi* would have been expected: *vota deum* for *quae dis vota sunt: me consortem nati concede sepulcro* for *me consortem nato concede sepulcri: mille coloribus arcum* for *mille colorum: coniciunt igni* for *coniciunt in ignem: tela exit* for *tela vitat*, and some others. His predilection for Greek sounds, rhythms, and inflections would probably be thought to need no justification to a well-educated Roman ear. As to the charge of rusticity or provincialism in style, Vergil may perhaps be supposed to be answering that when he appeals to the judgment of Asinius Pollio, "Pollio loves my Muse, for all that she is country bred;"[1] a curious coincidence, when it is remembered that it was this very Asinius Pollio who detected signs of provincialism in the style of Livy. When it was observed that Vergil invented new words, or used common words in new or unaccustomed senses, his friendly critics (whether in his lifetime or after his death is uncertain), answered that a great many of these words and usages were to be found in older poets, and that the objection to them was therefore based upon ignorance. Thus we find in the sixth book of Macrobius a plea of this kind urged in defence of the expressions *Mulciber*, *petulcus*, *liquidus ignis*, *tristis lupini*, *auritos lepores*, *turicremis aris*, *Arcitenens*, *silvicola*, *velivolum*, *vitisator*, *bimembres*, *caprigenum*, *volatile ferrum*, *togata gens*, and some others.

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[1] *Ecl.* iii. 84:—

Pollio amat nostram, quamvis est rustica, Musam.

The second point for consideration is Vergil's management of his story in the *Aeneid.* He was attacked not only for the order in which he presents his facts, but for want of invention in his incidents, or for faults of taste, or for defective knowledge, or for inconsistency, or other mistakes in his details.

It was said that in the narrative of the *Aeneid* Vergil ought to have preserved the order of events, beginning with the capture of Troy and then proceeding to the wanderings of Aeneas and his landing in Africa; putting in fact the second and third books before the first. The answer which was made to this cavil, very probably by Vergil himself, and certainly by his friendly critics, was complete. History was one thing, poetry another; the historian relates events continuously from the beginning to the end of his narrative, the poet strikes into the centre of the situation and returns afterwards, as opportunity offers, to the beginning. Here again we observe that Vergil's practice coincides exactly with the precept of Horace.[1] Follow Homer, say these poets; he does not begin his story of the Trojan war from the birth of Castor and Pollux, but takes his reader with him into the heart of the story. So Vergil, though in his first line he tells us that Aeneas came from Troy, begins his story with the storm off the coast of Sicily. This he does by way of following out his principles, that in great and small things alike Homer must again

[1] *Ars Poetica*, 143 foll. :—

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem
Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,
Antiphaten Scyllamque et cum Cyclope Charybdim,
Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,
Nec gemino bellum Troianum orditur ab ovo;
Semper ad eventum festinat, et in medias res
Non secus ac notas auditorem rapit, &c.

and again and always be the model for the Roman epic.

Turning to the details of Vergil's story and his handling of them, we find that a number of objections were made by the hostile critics and answered, sometimes successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully, by the poet's friends. Some of these are worth a passing notice.

Sometimes the poet was blamed for assigning great events to mean or trivial causes, as the wrath of Juno against Troy to her jealousy of Ganymede, and the war between Aeneas and Latinus to the slaughter of a stag. Sometimes he was charged with not paying sufficient attention to the chronology of the Homeric legend: as for instance when he makes Aeneas find a companion of Ulysses in Sicily seven years after Ulysses had landed there, and at the same time says that the man had only been there three months (*Aen.* iii. 590); or when in the ninth Aeneid (264) he says that Arisba had been conquered by Aeneas, whereas in Homer it was taken by Achilles. Sometimes it was observed that he altered the current history for the purposes of his narrative. The most striking instance of this was, of course, the episode of Dido, in the treatment of which Vergil notoriously disregarded the generally accepted chronology. There were minor points of a similar character. Vergil's account of the successive battles by which Aeneas finally obtained a footing in Italy was remarked upon as varying from the common accounts. It was said that Vergil was wrong in bringing Aeneas to Velia (*Aen.* vi. 359), for Velia was not yet founded at the time of Aeneas' arrival in Italy; that he committed an anachronism in his version of the fable of the birds of Diomede (*Aen.* xi. 271), and so on. Inconsistencies in Vergil's own narrative, as for instance that between the end of the second and beginning of the third books of the *Aeneid*, were pointed out, and, if possible, explained. The poet was blamed for false taste, as, for instance, when in the eighth book he represents Venus, the wife of Vulcan, asking her husband to make a suit of armour for her illegitimate son: for making Latinus offer his daughter unasked to Aeneas (*Aen.* vii. 268): for letting a hymn in celebration of the destruction of Troy by Hercules be sung in the presence of Aeneas (*Aen.* viii. 291). He was charged also with the invention of pure fictions, such as the story of the golden bough in the sixth book, and the change of ships into nymphs in the ninth. It was replied sometimes that a poet had a right to add a new fancy to the received mythology: sometimes that Vergil had followed recondite Greek stories unknown to his detractors.

A fierce contention was carried on between the critics on the subject of Vergil's imitation of Homer. His enemies accused him of plagiarism, and hunted up with venomous diligence a number of passages in which they maintained that he had not merely borrowed from Homer, but spoiled him in the borrowing. Several specimens of this criticism, worded with great vigour and acrimony, will be found in the thirteenth chapter of Macrobius' fifth book. Vergil's friends, on the other hand, quoted numerous passages in which they maintained that he had improved upon Homer (see Macrobius v. 11), and there was a good deal of neutral criticism, which merely collected the parallel passages without pronouncing any verdict, friendly or hostile, on the work of the Roman poet.

A great deal of the hostile criticism which dealt with these points must have been published soon after Vergil's death, for according to Suetonius it was replied to by Asconius Pedianus, a scholar who flourished in the first half of the first century A.D. This writer published a work *In Answer to the Detractors of Vergil* (*Contra Obtrectatores Vergilii*) in which he dealt mainly with Vergil's alleged offences in the handling of his narrative and in borrowing from Homer. Much, therefore, of the discussions on these points preserved by Servius and Macrobius may with reason be supposed to be taken from Asconius' work.

Another point of attack and defence, of much interest, apparently, to the literary Romans of those times, was Vergil's treatment of religious antiquities. While his enemies charged him with gross ignorance on many matters, his friends pointed out instances of his curious and recondite knowledge, and there are traces in Servius of an absurd tendency to discover allegorical allusions to Roman pontifical law in some of the simplest parts of Vergil's narrative.

I have thought it worth while to give these few specimens of the remarks made by writers of ability on Vergil's work in his own lifetime or shortly after. Much of this criticism will be brushed aside, and rightly, by modern readers who wish to obtain for themselves a clear impression of Vergil's poetical qualities. Yet it is by no means unimportant to gain some insight into the character of the questions raised by persons who lived when the ideas of the ancient world were fresh and young, and when classical Latin was still a living language. It will be observed that the hostile criticism directed against the *Aeneid* falls for the most part upon points of detail. Vergil, it is said, is provincial in his language; or he is too fond of Greek words and Greek inflections; or he strives affectedly after new combinations of words. Or again, in the handling of his story he is inconsistent with himself or with received tradition; he shows ignorance or carelessness in matters of antiquities; here and there he commits faults of taste; in his excessive admiration of Homer he becomes at times a servile and unsuccessful copyist. These are the main lines on which this criticism moves. Of remarks on Vergil's development of his characters, or on the success of his psychological analysis, there is hardly a trace. Nothing could illustrate better the difference between ancient and modern ideas of what poetry should be.

The scholars might pick Vergil's work to pieces as they would, but the poets were loud in his praise; and in spite of Macaulay's opinion to the contrary, I cannot help thinking that poets are the born critics of poetry. Who can understand aright the promptings of the poet's soul but he who has himself experienced them? who else can follow instinctively the creative movement of his hands, his swift and sure intuitions into the laws of that perfect union of thought and language and passion of which the poet's words are the sensible embodiment? All this the mere scholar can only follow at a distance. Propertius and Ovid saw at once what was in Vergil. Of the *Aeneid* Propertius said "something greater than the *Iliad* is coming to the birth." Ovid, a greater poet and a critic of clearer insight than Propertius, speaks of Vergil's "exiled Aeneas, the origin of lofty Rome, than which Latin letters own no work more illustrious."[1] No subsequent Roman poet dared to desert the lines on which Vergil worked; Ovid, and after him Lucan, Silius, Valerius Flaccus, Statius, imitate him as carefully and minutely as he had imitated Homer.

That the popular impression about Vergil agreed with the verdict of the poets is amply shown by the fact that mythology was soon busy with his early years. The day before he was born his mother, it was said, dreamed that she had brought forth a bough of laurel, which when planted in the earth sprang up at once into a beautiful tree, fully grown and covered with all kinds of flowers and fruits. When the child saw the light he uttered no cry, and his gentle looks gave certain hopes of a prosperous horoscope. A bough of poplar, planted after the custom of the country near the place where he was born, shot up in a short time and reached the height of some much older trees. Such fables grew up not uncommonly in those times in connection with men of great eminence. Their birth was preceded by strange dreams, and followed by marvels in the natural world. Thus a laurel was said to have sprung up in the Palatium on the day when Augustus was born, and similar wonders were related in connection with the birth of Vespasian.

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[1] Et profugum Aenean, altae primordia Romæ,
Quo nullum Latio clarius extat opus.

VII.

THE TEXT OF VERGIL.

The works of Vergil, like those of Cicero and Horace, soon became text-books for use in schools, for the Romans, however devoted they were to Greek literature, saw no objection against training up their youth to the enjoyment and imitation of their own classics. The text of Vergil has in some respects gained, while in others it has suffered by this circumstance. Vergil was not only one of the most widely read, but one of the most difficult of poets. The character of his writings, dealing as they do with so much that was remote and recondite in Greek or Italian story, the obscurity of many among his allusions, his love of antiquarianism and of Greek colouring in his language, the frequent subtlety and refinement of his expressions—all this at once made commentaries on his text exceptionally necessary. The earliest scholar who lectured on Vergil is said to have been Quintus Caecilius Epirota, who opened a school in 26 B.C. There is no evidence that he published his notes; but written criticisms on Vergil were published by C. Julius Hyginus, a freedman of Augustus and an intimate friend of Ovid, and other commentaries were compiled in the course of the first century A.D. by scholars of more or less eminence. These, in their original or abridged forms, became current in the schools,[1] and gathered fresh matter from the hands of fresh exponents in the second, third, and fourth centuries of the Christian era. In the fourth century Aelius Donatus and Servius published new commentaries, in which, probably, they embodied more matter from older writers than they added of their own.

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[1] Aulus Gellius (18, 57) speaks of *pervulgati commentarii* upon Vergil.

Meanwhile the text of Vergil was naturally copied over and over again, and it became a great point with scholars and teachers to get hold of correct transcripts. Of the current copies a few would be very good; we hear of one or two which professed to bear the hand of the poet himself, and of some which belonged to his household, or, in other words, which were written under his direction. But the greater number could of course claim no such position, and the numerous copies would naturally include versions of very various excellence. There were good and bad scribes in antiquity; but even the best were apt to be careless.

Thus a professor or schoolmaster explaining his Vergil might not seldom be in difficulties as to the text before him. It might happen that he was himself ignorant on some abstruse point of antiquities, history, or language; this we know to have been sometimes the case even with the best scholars. Or again, it might happen that the copy which he had in his hands was carelessly written, and offered readings which were obviously corrupt. Either of these causes singly, or both combined, might tempt him to correct the text, either by his own ingenuity or with the aid of some other commentator, and his correction might find its way into the books of his scholars, and remain there either as a marginal or interlinear note, or as part of the text itself.

It is no doubt in great measure due to the position which Vergil held as an author much read in schools, that we are fortunate enough still to possess manuscripts of his works which date as far back as the fourth century after Christ. Well written as these manuscripts are, and free as they are from many of the corruptions of form and spelling to which later documents are liable, they yet give excellent evidence of the confused state in which Vergil's text had been handed down. They contain many obvious errors, and many corrections and interpolations. Considering these in the light afforded us by the commentaries on Vergil, of which fragments remain, we find that one or other of the commentaries mention a large number of the variations offered by the manuscripts, but that there are cases in which this is not so, and in which a commentator quotes a reading of which there is no trace in our copies.

Vergil was not only a favourite author in schools, but served also as a quarry whence teachers of grammar and rhetoric drew illustrations of their rules. Hence in the numerous cases where he is quoted by such writers it is necessary to compare the version which they give with that of the existing manuscripts.

In these cases of variation the question arises whether the reading quoted by commentator or grammarian was derived from a genuine copy of Vergil, or whether it depended on conjecture, or inaccurate quotation. To decide this point is at times not an easy task, and the text of Vergil, even after all that has been done for it, still offers problems which await their final solution.[1]

VIII.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VERGIL'S POETRY.

It is now time to say a few words on the general characteristics of style, treatment, and thought which gave to Vergil the position that he occupies in literature.

Faust says to the pedant whose strength lies in mere memory and analysis, "Why, if you have anything to say, go out of your way to hunt for words? That only is of value which comes from your own heart." These words might at first sight seem spoken in disparagement of style, as though Goethe believed that sincerity and originality were the only essential elements of expression. Yet, more carefully considered, they do not imply this, but only that without true and original thought poetical style is impossible, while on the other hand thought does not become poetical until it has assumed its perfect and most rhythmical form of expression. To the poet the thought and the expression are one, and as mere words of beautiful sound are not poetry, so neither are thoughts when imperfectly uttered. A poet does not hunt for his words; they come to him as the natural embodiment of what he has to say. Even in the case of prose we feel instinctively that the finer the style the purer and more impassioned is the nature of the writer. This is the real secret of the invincible charm which a good style has for the general public. It is not the words, it is the spirit of the writer that enchains the attention of his hearers; "what is to move the heart must come from the heart." And how much more is this true of poetry! If any one were asked what is the secret of the power which he feels in such poets as Sophocles, Vergil, Dante, or Milton, he would probably answer at once that it was their style, and so the charm of gold or gems may be said to lie in their brilliancy and colour; but the brilliancy and colour are not, for all that, the whole of the gold or the gem.

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[1] The large edition of Vergil by Otto Ribbeck, with its *Prolegomena*, gives a very clear idea of the present condition of Vergil's text.

Unquestionably it was Vergil's style which more than anything else gave him his pre-eminence among Roman poets. It may be worth while to attempt, however imperfectly, to point out some of its peculiarities; more particularly as the elaborate study of language and metre is more characteristic, perhaps, of the Roman than of any other literature.

The poet Julius Montanus remarked that many of Vergil's verses, which in themselves were lifeless and dumb, sounded well when read by Vergil himself.

This is an interesting testimony not only to Vergil's power of reading, but to the fineness of his ear. There was a sound in his verses which he meant to be perceived, and which he himself knew how to awaken. And it will not be disputed that the great power of Vergil's style lies in the haunting music of his verse, in the rhythm and fall of his language. Such is his genius in this respect that anything which he says in his best manner becomes monumental: it can no more be forgotten than a strain of fine music. How many of his lines, ranging from the sphere of ordinary life, as in

> Tempus erat, quo prima quies mortalibus aegris
> Incipit et dono divum gratissima serpit,

to the height of moral emotion, as in

> Discite iustitiam moniti, et non temnere divos,

have become, as it were, the household words of literature! And it is not as if such lines were noticeable from their rarity; on the contrary, Vergil's writing is full of them: open him where we will, we cannot go wrong.

This fact is of itself the index of Vergil's supreme poetical power. And when we proceed, as in the case of a Roman poet, it is quite legitimate, nay, almost necessary, to do, to examine what kinds of study led Vergil into the line upon which he struck with such rare success, we find that it is because he was both more careful in his writing and more catholic in his sympathies than his great predecessors, Lucretius and Catullus. Nothing in its way can be more admirable than the limpid clearness and simplicity, the directness and intensity, which characterise these poets; but their hexameter, compared with Vergil's, lacks freedom and variety; its cadences are more uniform, the licences allowed are less frequent; it is a less perfect and flexible instrument.

As before said, Horace and Vergil were at one in insisting upon and practising a severer and more minute study of Greek than had been known to their predecessors. They had their reward. The consequence, in the case of Vergil, is not only that he is fond of filling his verses with Greek forms and Greek cadences, but that his lines are rich and harmonious with a new music, manifold in its capacity; it is as if the sound of the Greek language had awakened a sympathetic string in Italian. No doubt Vergil carried out to the letter the precept of Horace, "Let the Greek masterpieces be in your hands night and day."[1] One would suppose that he must have known Homer and the Greek tragedians by heart from his boyhood. And this profound study of the Greek poets influenced Vergil's creative efforts in another way. Other poets had been content with simply translating from Greek; Vergil not only translates, but works his Greek materials into new forms, sometimes adding new touches, sometimes abridging, sometimes combining into one passages which in his Greek original were far apart. The minuteness of his knowledge of the Greek poets is in itself a marvel. A commentator on the *Eclogues* or the *Aeneid* is constantly discovering that Vergil's verses give evidence of a memory of the smallest and apparently most unconnected details in Theocritus and Homer.

And as it was with the Greek, so it was with the Roman poets. Nothing escaped Vergil in the work of his predecessors, from Naevius to Lucretius. His critics, as we have seen, were puzzled by many of his expressions, which they thought were inventions of his own. His friends answered by showing that they were instances of old Latin now forgotten. Vergil's love of antiquarianism in language was often remarked upon. He aimed at producing a classical and representative style, and with this object in view was probably unwilling to tie himself exclusively to the manner of his own day.

Thus Vergil is one of those few poets the web of whose composition is strangely woven of learning and originality combined. Probably Milton affords, in this respect, the nearest parallel to him, as he also does in the unique and exquisite music of his periods, his wonderfully delicate alliterations, his love for the sound of ancient names.[1] It is difficult to read much at a time either of Vergil or Milton, if we would read them aright. There is something in almost every line that claims our attention; something that gives evidence of a mind, a study, a sense of beauty different in kind from that of most other poets. Dante is another genius of the same order; but, much as he resembles Vergil in spirit and manner, he is a poet of greater power and passion. Though the influence of Vergil is evident on his every page, he seems to absorb what he has learned in a broader and deeper and swifter stream of ideas. Milton and Vergil are more on a level—they are kindred spirits; their idea of poetry is the same, that its style shall be historical as well as passionate; that in the music of the present it shall never lose the echoes of the past; that no great interests enshrined in human record shall be alien to it.

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[1] Vos exemplaria Graeca
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.

Vergil's handling of his subjects has all the merits and defects which might be expected in a writer who is nothing if not poetical. In the *Georgics*, where he is professedly writing for purposes of instruction, he treats his subject with the view of bringing into prominence all that appeals to the imagination. His arrangement is at times so illogical that Ribbeck supposes the *Georgics*, as we have them, to be the unfinished draft of a second edition. Vergil looked at nature as a poet would look at it, and as other poets had looked at it. He loves it indeed for its own sake, but also because others had loved it before him; and hence the wealth of literary and mythological allusion with which every paragraph in the work abounds. He can, when he pleases, be perfectly clear in statement and explanation; but he is quite ready to sacrifice clearness to poetical effect and literary association. Hence he is sometimes obscure and incomplete, either because he is translating some perhaps imperfectly understood passage in one or other of his Greek originals, or because he feels that if he explained his point with the requisite fullness he would lapse into mere metrical prose. Didactic poetry is, from its very nature, a mistake. At the best it can be only half poetry; large parts of Lucretius, for instance, differ very little, except in form, from ordinary prose. This Vergil will not tolerate; he is determined that his *Georgics*, if nothing else, shall be poetry; and they almost cease, accordingly, to be a didactic poem in more than name. But, if the interest of the general reader in agriculture be considered, who can doubt that Vergil is right? For poetry is nothing if it cannot be read and enjoyed, and while it is difficult to read Lucretius through except for the purpose of studying his philosophy or his Latin style, Vergil carries us along, almost making us forget, in the charm of his imaginative handling, that he has any precepts to deliver.

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[1] Compare Vergil's

Cessere magistri,
Phillyrides Chiron Amythaoniusque Melampus,

and Milton's

Blind Thamyris, and blind Maeonides,
And Tiresias, and Phineus, prophets old.

The misfortune of the *Aeneid* has been, no doubt, that Vergil so openly challenged a comparison with the Homeric poems, and that at a time and in circumstances which rendered it impossible to reproduce more than their form and outward manner. Even allowing, however, the justice of much that can be said against Vergil on this score, the fact still remains that he created a style of epic which had been before unknown. Bernhardi has well said that Vergil was the founder of the "romantic epos." In the form of an epic poem the *Aeneid* includes many elements of lyric, and tragedy, and history. The notes of higher passion are sounded one after another in its narrative; the record of forsaken love is there, as well as of the patriotic struggles of warriors and the far-seeing counsels of kings. In the *Aeneid* we are in the midst of great events, and look forward to the determination of great historical issues; how cities are to be founded, what nation is to be mistress of the world.

Vergil gives his epic an element of romance by his two bold alterations of the current tradition in the cases of Dido and Turnus. Preller has truly said that nothing is more remarkable than the power with which the poet has inspired with soul-enchaining pathos the dry elements of a lifeless mythology. And, if we are moved by the romance in the *Aeneid*, we are no less struck by the clearness of its author's dramatic purpose. The figure of Aeneas himself is indeed somewhat obscured in the haze of moral and imperial qualities which, as founder of the Roman empire, he personifies; yet again and again his character stands out in the regal proportions which Vergil evidently intended to give it. The rest is clear, and cannot be forgotten; Dido, her royal quality and bearing, her cry of anguish when forsaken; the reckless hardihood and bravado of Turnus; the uncontrolled impiety of Amata; the majesty of King Latinus; the friendship of Nisus and Euryalus; the heroism of the virgin Camilla; the tremendous destiny compelling the wild Italian tribes to submission under a new law.

Vergil had intended to spend three more years in finishing the *Aeneid*, and hoped after that to devote his time to the study of philosophy. We have seen how he began life with hearing lectures on the Epicurean system in the school of Siron. The influences of this teaching are clearly discernible in the sixth Eclogue, and in one short passage (lines 415—23) of the first Georgic. But before the *Georgics* were finished Vergil had begun to look with favour on the teachings of Platonism, or at least of a popular form of Platonism. When describing the movements of the birds before the advent of fine weather in the lines just referred to, he denies that they are to be attributed to any motion of an indwelling divine power, and says that it is merely the condensation or expansion of the atoms which changes the form of their feelings. In the fourth Georgic, however, he speaks apparently with some sympathy of those philosophers who attribute the habits of bees to their sharing in the divine mind which

> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent.

"Following these tokens, some have said that bees have their part in the divine spirit, and have breathed the air of heaven; for God is present in all things, in the earth, the spaces of the sea, the immeasurable sky; from him come flocks, herds, men, every kind of beast, and each soul at its birth derives from him its delicate life; nay, that to him all things, their elements being resolved, are restored and given back, and that there is no place for death, but that the living particles fly upwards to form a constellation, mounting up into the height of heaven."[1]

Turning to the sixth Aeneid, in which, written as it was four years before Vergil's death, we might expect that this theme is more fully worked out, we do indeed find that Vergil supplements to some extent the fragment of speculation, on which, in the fourth Georgic, he had turned the glance of a poet. He explains it more fully, and adds, moreover, a statement of the doctrine of transmigration. Aeneas is taught (*Aen.* vi. 724) not only that the universe is animated by a divine spirit, whence the lives of individual beings are derived, but that, from the mixture of the heavenly element with a material frame, arise the passions of fear, desire, pleasure, and pain. Its material surrounding is the prison of the soul, which is thereby hindered from enjoying the unthwarted vision of the heaven from whence it came. Its purification takes place after death. Through various pains the soul is cleansed from the taint of matter which has grown into it, until in due time the element of pure fire is left remaining. The cycle begins again, and the emancipated soul is clothed once more in a body, and begins its life anew in another form, to undergo, we must suppose, in a fresh cycle, a fresh purification, and so to continue for ever the varying phases of existence.

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[1] *Georgic* iv. 219:—
His quidam signis atque haec exempla secuti
Esse apibus partem divinae mentis, et haustus
Aetherios dixere; deum namque ire per omnes
Terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum;
Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum,
Quemque sibi tenues nascentem arcessere vitas;
Scilicet huc reddi deinde ac resoluta referri
Omnia, nec morti esse locum, sed viva volare
Sideris in numerum, atque alto succedere caelo.

Considered as poetry, nothing can be finer than the verses in which this theory, imperfectly learned from Plato, is expounded ; but it cannot be said that in a philosophical sense Vergil has developed it with any fullness or clearness. Still less has he seriously attempted to reconcile it with the simpler idea on which the sixth Aeneid is in the main constructed, that the future life is a life of eternal retribution, for good or evil, for the deeds done here. Vergil has his Tartarus of eternal punishment, his Elysium of eternal joy. But in his Elysium, if we understand him aright, there are two orders of spirits ; one consisting of those who, after the purification above described, remain there for ever ; the other, and more numerous body, of those whose fate it is to return into material frames again. It will be at once felt how crude and popular is this way of getting over the difficulty. The theory of transmigration is, it need hardly be said, irreconcilable with that of eternal rewards and punishments ; and the sixth Aeneid would have been clearer had Vergil confined himself to the latter. But it was necessary for the development of his poetical idea that he should introduce somewhere, by way of prophecy, an allusion to the main events of Roman history. For this purpose, no other way being open to him, he has used the theory of transmigration; Tartarus and Elysium do duty for the past, the theories of Plato for the future.

There is a similar, but far less important confusion in the eighth Aeneid,[1] where two irreconcilable theories on the primitive state of Italy are put side by side in the mouth of Evander. According to the first view, civilization was developed from a ruder condition of life; primitive man was a being born of the trunks of trees, and ignorant of agriculture or thrift or desire for advancement. According to the other, the present state of things represents a degeneration from the times of the golden age, when all was virtue, simplicity, and happiness. Vergil's Evander represents Italy as first inhabited by the tree-born sons of earth. These were first civilized by Saturn, who with his government introduced the golden age. After Saturn came the ages of baser metal, the lust for blood and gain, and the condition of mankind in Italy sank through various vicissitudes.

These instances show that Vergil was more a poet than a philosopher; that his genius was fitted more for the elaboration of detail than for the clear grasping of general conceptions; that it is the satisfaction of the imagination, not of the logical faculty, for which he chiefly craves. Yet it is clear that he was not content with this attitude. He had intended, after giving three more years to the *Aeneid*, to leave poetry altogether and devote the rest of his life to philosophy. We are reminded here of the longing gaze with which he regarded philosophy at the time of writing the second Georgic. The true and happy life, he then said, lay in knowing the causes of things, and in mastering the fear of death; between that and the unreflecting happiness of the husbandman there was not much to choose. Of the constant aspiration which Vergil seems to have cherished towards something higher than poetry traces may, I think, be found in the grandeur of his moral utterances. His finest passages are those in which his poetry touches the borderland of ethics; whether, as in the sixth Aeneid, he is describing the forms of sin and disorder that throng the gate of hell, the crimes which plunge men into Tartarus, the virtues which raise them to Elysium, or whether Aeneas cheers his comrades to trust Heaven to bring them home—

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[1] 314 foll.

> O passi graviora, dabit deus his quoque finem,

or speaks kingly words over the dead fallen in battle, "the noble souls who have won us this our fatherland by their blood."[1]

IX.

A FEW WORDS ON VERGIL AS A POET OF NATURE.

Of the devotion to outward nature which poetry and science have combined to foster in modern times the ancient Greeks and Romans knew comparatively little. They were strangers to the minute study and analysis of form and colour, and to the mere enjoyment of Nature in her various aspects, which form so large an element in our art and our civilization in general. Yet it is possible to trace, in the Greek and Roman literature, a growing love of these marvels. Pindar has some magnificent lines on Aetna in eruption; and in Euripides, the most romantic of the Greeks, there are many lovely touches of descriptive writing. It is probable that the more careful observation of external phenomena which was encouraged by the Aristotelian philosophy and the systems which followed it did something to quicken the eyes of cultivated persons among the Greeks. There is a passage of splendid eloquence in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, in which the majesty and beauty of the universe is dwelt on in much detail as an argument in favour of the existence of a Deity. Now Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* is an almost entirely second-hand work, and the presumption is very strong in favour of supposing that the Roman orator is here translating from some Greek philosopher, more especially as stress is laid upon the beauties natural to a Greek landscape. Certainly, if we may trust Lucretius, whose poem is full of the most delicate and minute descriptions, Epicurus or his followers must have laid great stress on accurate observation of natural phenomena. It is true that Lucretius had by nature a very strong bent in this direction; and in his impassioned admiration of nature in her grander aspects he may be said to stand alone among the ancient poets whom we know; yet he may well have been encouraged by the lessons of the Epicurean philosophy.

---

[1] *Aen.* xi. 24:—

> Ite, ait, egregias animas, quae sanguine nobis
> Hanc patriam peperere suo, decorate supremis
> Muneribus.

With the general run of literary men the habit of travelling, which became very frequent in the last century of the Roman republic and onwards, would powerfully aid any tendency that existed to-towards the enjoyment of nature. Men travelled primarily, no doubt, to visit places of historical or legendary interest; but an appreciation of the features of countries and the beauties of landscape could not fail to follow. The remains of pictures found at Pompeii show that the Romans took pleasure in landscape-painting, though of a somewhat conventional and decorative kind.

Turning to the poets, we find that in treating nature, they seldom if ever advance beyond description, which may be more or less suggestive according to the power of the writer, but which does not enter deeply into the inner texture and spirit of his work. The great picture of sunrise at the beginning of the second part of *Faust*, or (to take a slighter and more familiar instance) Tennyson's *Lines in the Valley of Cauteretz*, would have been impossible in ancient poetry. Modern poetry has consciously fostered an inner sympathy between man and the natural world which the ancients must either have felt imperfectly, or failed, if they felt it, fully to express. Yet they loved nature in their own way, the Romans of the last century of the republic more probably than the Athenians of the time of Socrates. Witness Catullus when he addresses Diana, queen of the mountain and forest :—

> Montium domina ut fores,
> Silvarumque virentium,
> Saltuumque reconditorum
> Amniumque sonantum ;

or when he describes a stream starting high up on the side of a mountain :—

> Qualis in aerio perlucens vertice montis
> Rivus muscoso prosilit a lapide ;

witness Lucretius when he talks of a mountain ramble :—

> Palantes comites cum montes inter opacos
> Quaerimus, et magna dispersos voce ciemus ;

or Horace's inspired Bacchante, gazing awestruck over the Thracian landscape :—

> Insomnis stupet Evias
> Hebrum prospiciens, et nive candidam Thracen ;

or Ovid with his allusions to green waters, and his splendid description of sunrise :—

> Recludit
> Purpureas Aurora fores, et plena rosarum
> Limina.

The ancients as a rule do not show much love of mountain scenery ; and Vergil is not an exception to this statement. His elaborate lines on an eruption of Aetna in the third Aeneid were criticised by the Romans themselves as inferior to the passage in Pindar on which they are partly modelled; whether justly or not I cannot say. Whether Vergil had seen Aetna in eruption may be doubted; for he is not free from the vice of attempting sometimes to describe what he has not seen. This is certainly the case with the lines in the first Georgic, where he speaks of the giants trying to pile Olympus, Ossa, and Pelion upon each other:—

Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam
Scilicet, atque Ossae frondosum involvere Olympum;
Ter pater exstructos disiecit fulmine montes.

A direct reversal of the natural order; for Olympus is the largest and Pelion the smallest mountain of the three, as was well known to the Greek poet who wrote:—

Ὄσσαν ἐπ᾽ Οὐλύμπῳ μέμασαν θέμεν, αὐτὰρ ἐπ᾽ Ὄσσῃ
Πήλιον εἰνοσίφυλλον, ἵν᾽ οὐρανὸς ἄμβατος εἴη.

But for the mountains which he had seen, the forest-clothed hills of Italy, he had a real feeling.

Aut ipse coruscis
Cum fremit ilicibus quantus, gaudetque nivali
Vertice se attollens pater Appenninus ad auras.

But it might easily occur to the reader of Vergil that his ear was more susceptible than his eye. There is little in him of the minute observation of form and colour which strikes us in Lucretius. It is different, however, with sounds. With waters and forests he is evidently in real sympathy; his ear must have often listened for their alternations of sound and silence:—

Flumina amem silvasque inglorius. O, ubi campi
Spercheusque, et virginibus bacchata Lacaenis
Taygeta! O, quis me gelidis convallibus Haemi
Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!

A hundred passages might easily be quoted which echo, with exquisite music and subtle alliteration, the voices of forests and of waters, whether the roar of the sea or the murmurs of rivers. Here are some of them. They would be spoiled by any translation, unless it came from the hand of Milton himself:—

> Ecce supercilio clivosi tramitis undam
> Elicit; illa cadens raucum per levia murmur
> Saxa ciet, scatebrisque arentia temperat arva.
> (*Georg. I.* 108.)
>
> An mare, quod supra, memorem, quodque adluit infra?
> Anne lacus tantos? te, Lari maxime, teque,
> Fluctibus et fremitu adsurgens, Benace, marino?
> An memorem portus, Lucrinoque addita claustra,
> Atque indignatum magnis stridoribus aequor,
> Iulia qua ponto longe sonat unda refuso,
> Tyrrhenusque fretis immittitur aestus Avernis?
> (*Georg. II.* 158.)
>
> Non umbrae altorum nemorum, non mollia possunt
> Prata movere animum, non qui per saxa volutus
> Purior electro campum petit amnis.
> (*Georg. III.* 520.)
>
> Tum sonus auditur gravior, tractimque susurrant,
> Frigidus ut quondam silvis immurmurat Auster;
> Ut mare sollicitum stridit refluentibus undis;
> Aestuat ut clausis rapidus fornacibus ignis.
> (*Georg. IV.* 260.)
>
> At illum
> Curvata in montis faciem circumstetit unda,
> Accepitque sinu vasto, misitque sub amnem.
> Iamque domum mirans genetricis, et umida regna,
> Speluncisque lacus clausos, lucosque sonantes,
> Ibat, et, ingenti motu stupefactus aquarum
> Omnia sub magna labentia flumina terra
> Spectabat diversa locis.
> (*Georg. IV.* 360.)
>
> Unde per ora novem vasto cum murmure montis
> It mare proruptum et pelago premit arva sonanti.
> (*Aen. I.* 245.)
>
> Cum subito adsurgens fluctu nimbosus Orion
> In vada caeca tulit.
> (*Aen. I.* 535.)

Tum mihi caeruleus supra caput adstitit imber,
Noctem hiememque ferens, et inhorruit unda tenebris.
Continuo venti volvunt mare, magnaque surgunt
Aequora.
(*Aen. III.* 194.)

Divinosque lacus et Averna sonantia silvis.
(*Aen. III.* 442.)

Et gemitum ingentem pelagi pulsataque saxa
Audimus longe fractasque ad litora voces,
Exsultantque vada atque aestu miscentur harenae.
(*Aen. III.* 555.)

Nox erat, et placidum carpebant fessa soporem
Corpora per terras, *silvaeque et saeva quierant*
Aequora, cum medio volvuntur sidera lapsu,
Cum tacet omnis ager, pecudes pictaeque volucres,
Quaeque lacus late liquidos, quaeque aspera dumis
Rura tenent, somno positae sub nocte silenti.
(*Aen. IV.* 522.)

Tartaream intendit vocem, qua protinus omne
Contremuit nemus et silvae insonuere profundae;
Audiit et Triviae longe lacus, audiit amnis
Sulpurea Nar albus aqua, fontesque Velini.
(*Aen. VII.* 514.)

But I will not weary the reader with any more quotations on a point in regard to which it is better to make suggestions than to illustrate at length.

X.

TABLE OF DATES.

B.C.
70. First Consulship of Pompeius and Crassus. Birth of Vergil.
65. Birth of Horace.
55. Second Consulship of Pompeius and Crassus. Vergil takes the *toga virilis*.

B.C.

54 or 53. Vergil begins the study of philosophy. The seventh poem of the *Catalepton.*

49. Julius Caesar confers the Roman citizenship on the inhabitants of Gallia Transpadana.

44. Assassination of Julius Caesar.

43. Earliest date assignable to any of the Eclogues.

42. Battle of Philippi.

41. Confiscations by the Triumvirs; Vergil, Propertius, and Tibullus all suffer. *Eclogue* ix. The tenth poem of the *Catalepton;* Vergil flies to the villa of Siron. Commencement of Vergil's acquaintance with Maecenas.

40. Consulship of Asinius Pollio. Restoration of Vergil to his estate. *Eclogues* i., iv., viii., and possibly vi.

37. *Eclogue* x. Vergil and Varus meet Horace at Sinuessa. Construction of the *portus Julius* by Agrippa; the *Georgics* probably not begun before this year. Phraates ascends the throne of Parthia.

33. Roman troops withdrawn from the East. Armenia and Media overrun by Phraates. The Roman Empire threatened with civil war. The Suevi probably cross the Rhine: *Georg.* i. 498 foll.; ii. 495 foll.

32. Revolution in Parthia. Phraates driven into exile; his flight to the Scythians. The events of this year are alluded to in the twelfth poem of the *Catalepton.*

31. Battle of Actium. Octavianus leaves Italy for the East (winter).

30. Settlement of the East by Octavianus. *Georgic* ii. 171–2.

29. Return of Octavianus; divine and human honours decreed to him; his triple triumph. *Georgics* read to him at Atella by Vergil and Maecenas. Openings of the first and of the third *Georgics.* Temple of Janus closed: *Aen.* viii. 714, i. 289.

B.C.

27. Title of Augustus conferred upon Octavianus.
26. Augustus leaves Italy for the campaign against the Cantabri, on which he is absent during this and the following year. His correspondence with Vergil.
23. Death of Marcellus. Recitation of the sixth Aeneid to Augustus and Octavia.
20. Expedition of Augustus to the East. *Aen.* vi. 794; vii. 606.
19. Journey of Vergil to Greece. His death.

THE END.

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